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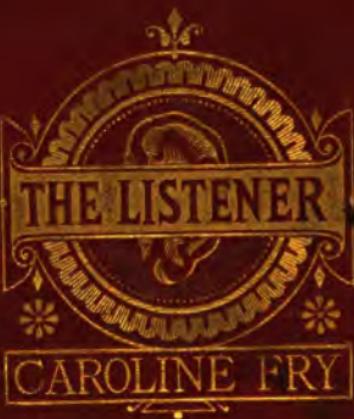
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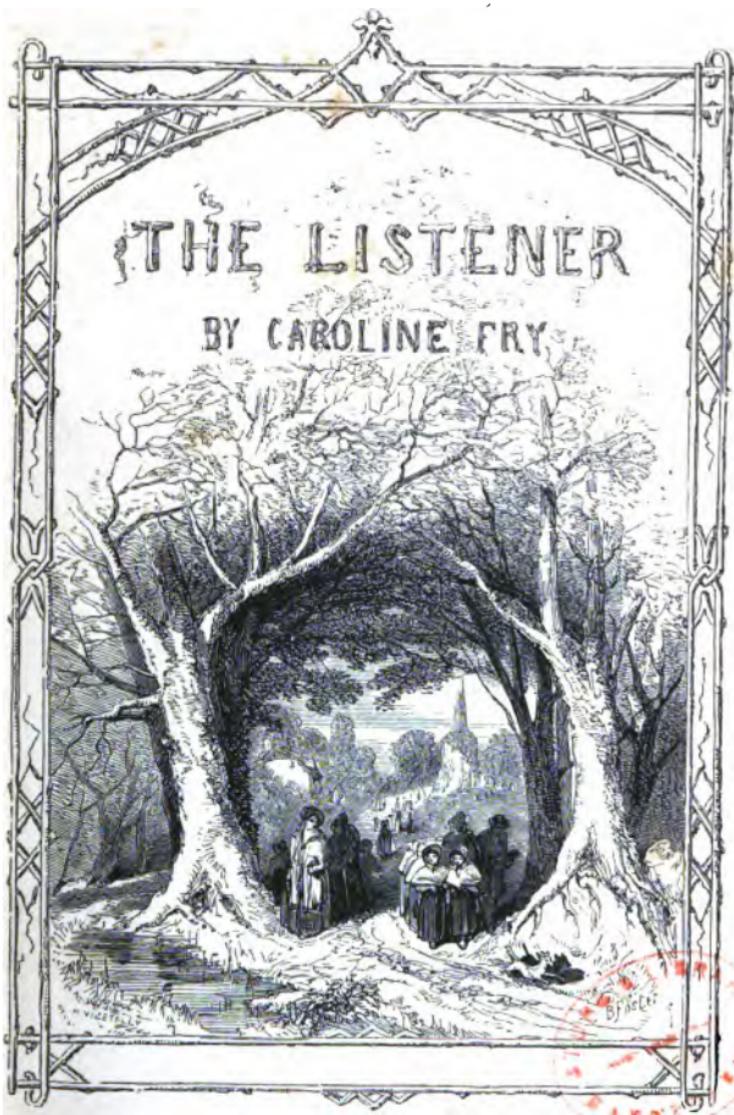


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THE LISTENER.





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THE LISTENER.

BY

CAROLINE FRY,

AUTHOR OF "THE ASSISTANT OF EDUCATION," ETC.

THIRTEENTH EDITION.

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THE office of Listener is not one of very honourable note, especially when determined to tell what he hears: but, to deprecate the wrath of my readers against so treacherous an intermeddler with their studies and their sports, I entreat them to consider that good may be wrought of that with which we usually work evil. If I have the misfortune to have no business of my own, and a peculiar talent for observing other people's—if my sight is so keen, and my hearing so acute, as to perceive what is passing where I am not present, to see through the roof, and to hear through the walls—what can I do but endeavour to make the best use of so dangerous an endowment, and employ it for the benefit of others? I whisper no idle tale in gossip's ear; I write no

satires upon innocent mistakes—no dry lectures upon well-known evils; but I bear about with me, as it were, a reflecting glass, which I present to the actors in the scenes before me, that, seeing in it what is, they may haply discover what better might be. I may sometimes listen, and sometimes dream, and sometimes be forced to perform the task without the benefit of either; but, however it be, I hope my young friends will accept my monthly communication, without being too curious as to how I came by my information, granting me always the privilege of hearing and overhearing whatever I think proper.





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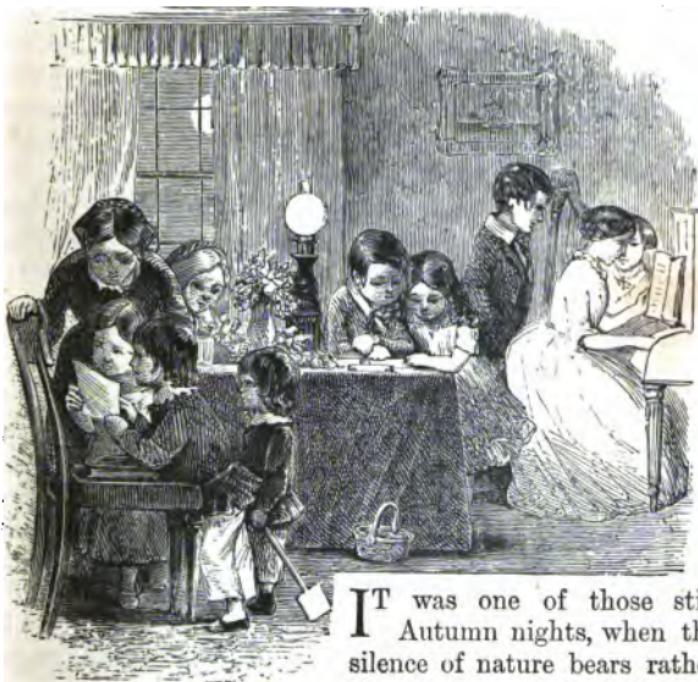
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Music.

Music oft has such a charm,
To make bad good, and good provoke to harm.



IT was one of those still Autumn nights, when the silence of nature bears rather the character of death than of repose—when, the ear listening in vain for so much as the falling of a withered leaf, a momentary sensation steals upon the mind that we only are remaining in existence, while all is extinct besides. There was not so much as a ripple to

break the moonbeam that was sleeping on the water, a still, pale streak of unvarying brightness. A few dark sails hung motionless upon the surface, soliciting the breeze in vain ; but most, in despair of further progress, had dropped the anchor and betaken themselves to the hold, whence a gleam of light now and then glanced upon the water to give the only token of existence. The moon hung in solitary splendour midway in the heavens, and the outline of every object was as distinctly traced as in the full light of day ; seeming to gain magnitude and sublimity by the loss of colouring. The cliff appeared to have grown to immeasurable height, the woods to impenetrable thickness. There was not in all the heavens a cloud, nor on all the earth a vapour. Thoughts of lightness and folly can find no welcome in the mind at such an hour as this. That Being with whom we seem to be left alone in the universe, becomes more sensibly the guardian of our path. When removed from all other observation, we grow more conscious of His presence ; and the sensation is powerful, though mistaken, that persuades us He can more distinctly mark our feelings in the solitude of night than amid the noise and bustle of the day.

It was so I felt and so I thought, as I walked between the huge dark cliff, and the far-receded waters, listening in vain for any sound that might break on the imperturbable stillness of the evening. I was now drawing near to the habitations of men, that, stretching from the town, spread themselves at unequal distances along the cliff; rare, at first, but increasing in thickness as they drew nearer to the centre from which they emanated. Here too all was silent. Small store of fire and candles had bidden the peasant early to his rest—the cottage door was closed—the honest were wrapt in wholesome slumber, and the nightly depredator had not yet come forth on his errand of mischief. I paused a moment to consider the mercy of Him who watches over the unguarded pillow of the one, and forbears the punishment due to the deeds of the other, when a sound, as of distant music, came upon my ear. Walking a little forward, I

perceived that it proceeded from a house, yet at some distance, that stood between me and the town. The notes, as far as I could distinguish them, were soft and plaintive; and in the silence of such a night, there seemed to me something in them almost celestial. My feelings at that moment told me music was the gift of Heaven, and therefore must have been given for our good; and rapidly my mind ran over the various uses that have been made of it.

In every age and every country, music has been made the emblem of whatever is most lovely and enchanting; and whether the tales that are told us of its influence be truth or fiction, they equally prove the general perception of its power over the feelings and affections of humanity. From the coarse whistle of the ploughboy riding homeward on the fore-horse of his team, to the loud peal of the organ amid the chorus of some hundred voices, music seems to be the most natural language of the happy, the spontaneous solace of the sad. With every idea of things beautiful, pure, and delightful, music has been associated; but we never mix it with the images of things base, vicious, and disgraceful. No heathen savage ever pictured to himself a future heaven, but he placed music among the first of his delights: and in those bright prospects of eternal bliss, so often opened to us in the Holy Scriptures, music is always made a part, real or emblematical, of our promised enjoyment.

A power so universal in its influence on our feelings, so naturally combined with whatever is good and fair, and honoured with so much notice in the commands and promises of God, must surely be a gift from Heaven, for the use of which we are responsible. Given, as we must suppose it, to our first parents in Paradise, it was there the language of gratitude and joy. The first use of music upon earth, perhaps, was to sound forth the praises of the Creator; and certainly it is the only one of our talents, of the continuance and purpose of which hereafter any mention has been made. Surely, then, it is a gift too sacred to be used as an instrument of folly and impiety. It is not my purpose here to

disclose the worst uses to which it has been perverted—may my readers long and ever continue strangers to them !

My loitering steps now brought me near to the window whence the delightful sounds had issued. I heard them still, and could distinguish voices mingled in natural and simple harmony. Imagination supplying what I did not hear, I fancied it the language of piety going forth from glad and grateful hearts, and stealing through the silence of the night to find gracious acceptance at the throne of mercy ; and now my propensity to know more than was intended for my observation became strong within me—ascending a mound directly opposite to the inviting window, I set myself to see what might be passing within.

The room was dressed with flowers, and gaily lighted, shining with many a fair and happy countenance. There was not a brow amongst them that seemed to bear the weight of twenty years, and some not half that number. The little group were variously occupied. Some were examining the wild-flowers, or turning over the shells and pebbles that had been gathered in their morning walk— others were spreading forth prints and drawings for the amusement of their friends. Of the younger, some were deeply intent on the intricate puzzle ; of the elder, one was placed at the piano, while another tuned the harp, and the leaves of the music-book were rapidly turned over in search of the selected song.

My active fancy now found ample business. There was so much innocence in the employments, and so much pleasure in the countenances, of the young assembly, that all seemed in unison with my previous feelings. I imagined it some happy birthday night, which the inmates of the mansion had assembled their friends to celebrate. I looked on each countenance separately, and saw not on one a frown of ill-humour or a shade of sorrow. Here then at least, I whispered to myself, is the use of music not perverted. Some child beloved has completed another of her early years, and the hearts of those who love her are glad and grateful. Strains of moral feeling, perhaps of cheerful piety, are going forth from hearts as yet untainted with the follies and the

fashions of the world ; from lips that no unholy jest, no thoughtless impiety, as yet has stained. The music began ; the air was plaintive. If it had not the sublimity of our best sacred music, it was feeling, chaste, and beautiful. I descended quickly from the mound, and placed myself near enough to the window indistinctly to catch the words. But my dreams of grateful devotion and moral purity, how were they dissipated, when the first words I distinguished were an impassioned address to a heathen god, beginning "Dieu d'Amour," and going on with a great deal about "les Astres," "les Parques," and other objects of a Pagan's worship : My pleasure was past ; but curiosity retained me on the spot, and I waited patiently another and another song. The second was Italian, the sweetest language of music, and the most perverted. The best I could hope here was, that performers and audience were alike ignorant of the nonsense, not to say indelicacy, of the words they were singing. At last I distinguished the accents of our native tongue, and something of a better hope revived—for now the young performers at least must know the meaning of their words. I heard the name of God—the Christian's God : and listened with redoubled earnestness : though, in truth, there seemed something of profanation in the mixture ; but, alas ! it was more in accordance than I thought. That sacred name was used but as an expression of earnestness on subjects with which the thought of Him could not possibly combine. How I wished I were at that moment on the mound, to see if a blush did not suffuse the cheeks of the singer as she uttered a name she could not be accustomed to profane : Or can it be that the lips of innocence may sing without thought or feeling words they dare not speak—sentiments they would blush to feel—breathe out a mockery of prayer under cover of a foreign language, and make sport of names, at the mention of which angels in heaven bow their heads with reverence ? The best that can be said is, that they think no wrong, and, in the enjoyment of the music, give no heed to the meaning of the words ; but that is not the less a danger to which we are insensible ; and custom has gone far

indeed to do its work of mischief, if words of folly and impiety *can* pass our lips without exciting our attention. Again my mind recurred to what music might be—to what it ought to be. Its powerful influence on our hearts—its fitness to excite and to express the best and finest feelings of our nature—above all, its peculiar suitability to speak the feelings of a grateful heart, at peace with God and with itself. I listened no more that night.



Time.

I saw the leaves gliding down a brook—
Swift the brook ran, and bright the sun burn'd—
The sere and the verdant, the same course they took ;
And sped gaily and fast, but they never return'd.
And I thought how the years of a man pass away,
Threescore and ten—and then where are they ?

H. NEEDLE.



“THRESCORE years and ten,” thought I to myself, as I walked, one rainy morning, as a sailor walks the quarter-deck, up and down a short alcove, extending before the windows of a modern house. It was one of those days in June in which our summer hopes take umbrage at what we call unseasonable weather, though no season was ever known to pass without them. Unlike the rapid and delightful showers of warmer days, suddenly succeeding to the sunshine, when the parched vegetables and arid earth seize with avidity and imbibe the moisture ere it becomes unpleasant to our feelings, there had fallen a drizzling rain throughout the night; the saturated soil returned to the atmosphere the humidity it could no longer absorb, and there it hung in chilling thickness between rain and fog. The birds did not sing, for their little wings were heavy,

and their plumage roughed. The flowers did not open, for the cold drop was on their cheek, and no sunbeam was there to welcome them. Nature itself wore the garb of sadness, and man's too dependent spirits were ready to assume it,—those, at least, that were not so happy as to find means of forgetting it. Such was the case with my unfortunate self. I had descended to the breakfast-room at the usual hour, but no one appeared; I looked for a book, but found none except Moore's Almanack and Paterson's Road-book. The books were kept in the library, beyond all dispute their proper place, had I not been in a humour to think otherwise. The house was too hot, and the external air was too cold, and I was fain to betake myself to that last resource of the absolutely idle, a mechanical movement of the body up and down a given space. And from the alcove where I walked I heard the ticking of the timepiece; and as I passed the window I saw the hands advance; every time I had returned they had gone a little further. "Threescore years and ten," said I to myself, "and a third or a fourth of it is nature's claim for indispensable repose; and many a day consumed on the bed of sickness; and many a year by the infirmities of age; and some part of all necessarily sacrificed to the recruiting of the health by exercise. And what do we with the rest?" Nothing answered me but the ticking of the clock, of which the hands were traversing between nine and ten. They had nearly met at the latter hour, when the party began to assemble within; and each one commenced, for aught I could discover, the functions of the day; for neither their appearance nor their remarks gave any intimation that they had been previously employed. One, indeed, declared the weather made her so idle she had scarcely found strength to dress herself; another confessed he had passed an additional hour in bed, because the day promised him so little to do up. One by one, as they dropped in, the seats at the breakfast-table filled; and as a single newspaper was all the apparent means of mental occupation, I anticipated some interesting conversation. I waited and I watched. One ran the point of his fork into the tablecloth; another balanced

her spoon on the teacup ; a third told backwards and forwards the rings on her fingers, as duly as a friar tells his beads. As such actions are the symptoms sometimes of mental occupation, I began to anticipate the brilliant results of so much thinking. I cried Hem ! in hopes to rouse them to expression, and not quite unsuccessfully ; for one remarked it was a wretched day, another wished it was fine, and a third hoped it shortly would be so. Meantime the index of the clock went round—it was gaining close upon eleven before all had withdrawn from the table. My eye followed one to the window-place, where, with her back to the wall, and her eyes fixed without, she passed a full half-hour in gazing at the prospect, or wishing, perhaps, the mist did not prevent her seeing it. A very young lady was so busy in pulling the dead leaves from a geranium, and crumbling them in her fingers, I could not doubt but some important purpose was in the task. A third resumed the newspaper he had read for a whole hour before, and betook himself at last to the advertisements. A fourth repaired to the alcove, gathered some flowers, picked them to pieces, threw them away again, and returned. "Cease thy prating, thou never-resting timepiece," said I to myself, "for no one heeds thy tale. What is it to us that each one of thy tickings cuts a link from our brief chain of life ? Time is the gift of Heaven, but man has no use for it."

I had scarcely thought out the melancholy thought, when a young lady entered with an elegant work-box, red without and blue within, and filled with manifold conveniences for the pursuance of her art. Glad was I most truly at the sight. By the use of the needle the naked may be clothed—ingenuity may economise her means, and have more to spare for those that need it—invention may multiply the ways of honest subsistence, and direct the ignorant to the use of them ; most glad was I, therefore, that the signal of industry drew more than one wanderer to the same pursuit—though not till much time had been consumed in going in and out, and up and down, in search of the materials. All was found at last : the party worked ; and I, as usual,

listened. "I think this trimming," said one, "will repay me for my trouble, though it has cost me three months' work already, and it will be three months more before it is finished."—"Indeed," rejoined her friend, "I wish I were half as industrious. But I have been working six weeks at this handkerchief, and have not found time to finish it; now the fashion is past, and I shall not go on."—"How beautifully you are weaving that necklace! Is it not very tedious?"—"Yes, almost endless; but I delight in the work, otherwise I should not do it,—for the beads cost almost as much as I could buy it for."—"I should like to begin one this morning," interposed a fourth, "but the milliner has sent home my bonnet so ill-trimmed, it will take me all the day to alter it. The bow is on the wrong side, and the trimming at the edge is too broad. It is very tiresome to spend all one's life in altering things we pay so much for."—"I wish," said a little girl at the end of the table, "that I might work some trimmings for my frock, but I am obliged to do this plain work first. The poor lame girl in the village, who is almost starving, would do it for me for a shilling, but I must save my allowance this week to buy a French trinket I have taken a fancy to."

"Poor thing! she is much to be pitied," said the lady of the trimming; "if I had time, I would make her some clothes."

And so they worked, and so they talked, till I and the timepiece had counted many an hour which they took no account of, when one of them yawned and said, "How tedious are these wet days!—it is really impossible to spin out one's time without a walk."

"I am surprised you find it so," rejoined the lady of the beads; "I can rarely make time for walking—though keeping the house makes me miserably languid." And so the morning passed. It was four o'clock, and the company dispersed to their apartments. I pretend not to know what they did there; but each one returned between five and six in an altered dress. And then half an hour elapsed, in which, as I understood from their impatience, they were

waiting for dinner, each in turn complaining of the waste of time occasioned by its delay ; and the little use it would be to go about anything when it was so near. And as soon as dinner was over, they began to wait for tea with exactly the same complainings. And the tea came—and, cheered by the vivifying draught, one did repair to the instrument, and began a tune,—one did take up a pencil, and prepare to draw,—and one almost opened a book. But, alas ! the shades of night were growing fast—ten minutes had scarcely elapsed before each one resigned her occupation with a murmur at the darkness of the weather ; and though some person suggested that there were such things as lamps and candles, it was agreed to be a pity to have lights so early in the midst of summer, and so another half hour elapsed.

The lights, when they came, would have failed to relumine an expectation in my bosom, had not their beams disclosed the forms of various books which one and another had brought in for the evening's amusement. Again I watched, and again I listened. "I wish I had something to do, mamma," said the little girl. "Why do you not take a book and read ?" rejoined her mother. "My books are all up-stairs," she replied ; "and so near bed-time, it is not worth while to fetch them."—"This is the best novel I ever read," said a lady, something older, turning the leaves mean time so very fast, that those who are not used to this method of reading might suppose she found nothing in it worthy of attention. "I dare say it is," said another, whose eyes had been fixed for half an hour on the same page of Wordsworth's poems—"but I have no time to read novels."—"I wish I had time to read anything," said a third, whom I had observed already to have been perusing attentively the title-page of every book on the table, publisher's name, date, and all ; whilst a fourth was too intensely engaged in studying the blue cover of a magazine to make any remark whatever.

And now I was much amused to perceive with what frequency eyes were turned upon the dial-plate, through all the day so little regarded. Watches were drawn out, compared,

and pronounced too slow. With some difficulty one was found that had outrun his fellows, and, determined to be right, gave permission to the company to disperse little more than twelve hours from the time of their assembling, to recover, as I supposed, during the other twelve, dressing and undressing included, the effect of their mental and bodily exertions. "So," I exclaimed, as soon as I found myself alone, "twelve times round yonder dial-plate those little hands have stolen, and twelve times more they may now go round unheeded. They who are gone to rest have a day the less to live, and record has been made in heaven of that day's use. Will He who gave, ask no reckoning for His gifts? The time, the thoughts, the talents—the improvement we might have made, and made not—the good we might have done, and did not—the health, and strength, and intellect, that may not be ours to-morrow, and have not been used to-day—will not conscience whisper of it ere they sleep to-night? The days of man were shortened upon earth by reason of the wickedness the Creator saw. Three-score years and ten are now his portion, and often not half the number. They pause not; they loiter not—the hours strike on—and they may even go—for it seems they are all too much. The young, with minds as yet unstored, full of error, full of ignorance in all that it behoves them most to know, unfit alike as yet for earth or heaven—the old, whose sum of life is almost told, and but a brief space remaining to repair their mistakes, and redeem the time they have lost—the simple and ungifted, who having from nature but little, need the more assiduity to fulfil their measures of usefulness, and make that little do the most it may—the clever and highly talented, who have an almost appalling account to render for the much received—they all have time to waste. But let them remember, time is not their own—not a moment of it, but is the grant of Heaven—and Heaven gives nothing without a purpose and an end. Every hour that is wasted, fails of that purpose; and in so far as it is wasted or ill-spent, the gift of Heaven is misused, and the misuse is to be answered for. Methinks I would be allowed

to whisper nightly in the ears of my young friends, as they lie down to rest, "How many minutes have you lost to-day, that might have been employed in your own improvement, in your Maker's service, or for your fellow-creatures' good?"



Conversation.

Conversation is the daughter of reasoning, the mother of knowledge, the breath of the soul, the commerce of hearts, the bond of friendship, the nourishment of contentment, and the occupation of men of wit.



“OLD your tongue, Miss Julia; little girls should be seen and not heard,” said Mrs B.’s nursery governess to a little sprite of seven years old, who was essaying to take a turn in the chatter of the breakfast-table. For I would not have my readers suppose that a nursery breakfast passes without chatter. I who traverse houses from corner to corner, and listen from behind the doors, know better. From

the nursery to the kitchen, from the school-room to the parlour, all is chatter, and one might conclude the power of talking increases in inverse ratio with the information possessed. But be it not thence concluded that I am no friend to talking. We listeners are considerably interested in the furtherance ~~of~~ the custom; and it may even appear, ere the end of my tale, that I have a very different object in view than that of putting my young friends to silence.

It is objected by some, that young people talk too much, and by others, that they talk too little; and each remark is

just—for they do both. But here, be it observed, I speak only of persons under twenty ; far be it from me to suppose that any lady above that age can be charged with the habit I presume to censure.

When young people are alone, freed from the constraints of society and the presence of those who are older and wiser than themselves, their ceaseless volubility, the idleness, uselessness, and folly of their conversation is all too much ; not a pause to reflect upon their words—not a moment to weigh the sentiments they hear—not a care for the time they waste, or for the habits of trifling and exaggeration they acquire. But in society they talk too little. An unreasonable fear of exposing their sentiments loses to them the best means of ascertaining if they are right. A want of that simplicity of mind, which, conscious of no design, does not look to be charged with a wrong one, makes them fear to be thought ostentatious—while the real difficulty of expressing themselves, from want of being accustomed to it—a difficulty their indolence would rather keep than make an effort to subdue—prevents their joining in conversation on subjects on which they are fully able to speak, and would gain information by doing so : Modesty forbids them to suppose they can contribute to the pleasure of the conversation, and pride is not well pleased to take the benefit and contribute nothing.

I have wondered often how all this befalls—but now methinks I have stolen a key that may unlock the mystery. Little Julia was to be seen and not heard—that is to say, she was to ask no questions when her infant mind was struggling to enlarge itself by increase of knowledge—she was to express no feeling that moved her little bosom, or thought that awakened in her dormant intellect. But Julia was to listen, I suppose ; and much may be learned by silent attention. She listened—and so did I—and we learned a great deal—for we heard all that the footman had told the cook, and the cook had told the nursery-maid—and we gained an insight into our neighbours' affairs, and heard many wonders, the incredibility of which never failed to secure belief ; whereas

what was simply true and certain was warmly contested. Added to all this, were the schemes of deception and petty artifices that I do not judge it honourable to disclose.

This, then, I thought within myself, is little Julia's first lesson in the art of talking ; a lesson she will probably repeat after her own manner, the first time she escapes with her younger sisters to a private corner, and not being allowed to inquire, her mind must work, for work it will, upon the hopeful materials it has gathered ; and I heard her in truth, not long after, exaggerating, and mimicking, and wondering, and disputing, as fast as her happy little tongue could move, to evince its delight at the resumption of its powers.

The powers of speech are among the most important committed to our charge ; and as capable as any other of a right or a wrong cultivation ; there is this only difference—that while other powers lie dormant from neglect, these will be in action whether cultivated or not, and if we do not direct them to the right, will most certainly expend themselves on the wrong. If a young person is not allowed, or not encouraged to speak with her parents and equals, she will requite herself by talking to her waiting-maid ; and if she be not accustomed in society to converse rationally and sensibly, she will most surely spend the powers given her for better purposes, in idle gossip or mischievous slander.

From the lessons in the nursery, Julia passes to the school-room. She there learns much, and perhaps thinks much, but has little opportunity to communicate. If the discipline be strict, she is desired to hold her tongue, and mind her lesson ; if it be indulgent, she may talk, indeed, as fast as it pleases her—she may repeat, with the more exaggeration the better, all the tittle-tattle she has heard elsewhere—what this person says, and that person does, and the other person wears—but no one takes any care to lead her to subjects useful and improving, to correct her misconceptions, and false ideas, and rash assertions. And here I entreat my readers to attend—for if the fault has been hitherto charged to the nurse and to the governess, it now becomes their own.

And so it was that some years after my first acquaintance

with Julia in the nursery—it was a cheerless night—the heavens were hung with the thick pillowy clouds that betoken coming snow—scarcely might here and there a pallid star peep forth, perceived but a moment ere it was gone, and returned no more. I watched them long, and they became fewer and fewer—and one by one I saw the clouds close over them, as time closes over the joys that are past. And now the vapours united into one unshadowed and unbroken mass of blackness. The winds just whispered through the leafless trees, a low and melancholy sound, and I began to feel the cold droppings of the fleecy shower. More silent than the thief upon his midnight errand, unheard and unsuspected from within, the snow stole down upon the iron earth, to prepare for the returning sun far other landscape than that he shone upon before he set. I was some distance yet from home, and liking to observe nature in all her varied aspects, I sought shelter in the porch of a handsome dwelling-house that fronted the path I was treading. There, through an opening in the crimson curtains of an adjoining window, I looked upon a scene strikingly contrasted with that which was without. A blazing fire, recently fed with the dry log, crackled and sparkled on the hearth. The reeking urn, with the tall candles by its side, was hissing on the table. The downy rug and many-coloured carpet, with the deep crimson of the curtain, gave a glow, a tone of warmth to the picture, strikingly opposed to the growing whiteness of the scene without. A number of young persons were in the room; the plainness of their dress, their easy familiarity and small numbers, did not indicate a party, and yet there were more than might belong to a single family. This was not hard to understand. And how powerfully came to my mind, at the moment, the boundless munificence of that Being, who has provided enjoyments for every season, comforts for nature's most sad and cheerless hours: What was to them the chilling shower that fell without, or the frost that bound the palsied earth in iron hardness? In the enjoyment of present pleasures, other, but not less, they sighed not at recollection of the tints of autumn or the

summer's sun. And then came into my gladdened mind all the delights of social intercourse—of sentiments sweetly responding to each other—of feelings tenderly participated—of argument without dispute—reproof without unkindness. And I thought, if I might not share it, I might now at least contemplate it; and so I tried to list what passed within. To ordinary persons this might have been difficult. But what can professed listeners not hear?

The youthful party, for such it was, had recently met, as it seemed to me, to pass a social evening, all on familiar terms, and intimately acquainted; therefore there was neither reserve nor form to check their communications. The tea was making, and as they sipped the fragrant draught, the talk went blithely round. It began as usual with the weather. I do not exactly object to this, because something must be said first; and as the beginning address is a great difficulty to the reserved and modest, it is very well to have an established form of commencement, fitted for all circumstances. But I did think half-an-hour something too long for this prelude. And I did think besides, that when one called it miserable weather, and another said it was a wretched day, and a third declared it put her quite out of temper, and a fourth wished she could sleep till it was finer, the speakers either did not well regard the meaning of their words, or had formed an extraordinary estimate of misery and wretchedness, as well as of the value of time, and the preservatives of good-humour. And I began to be something impatient, when one remarked at some length on the wonderful shortening of the days, which, as it usually occurs in November, I thought scarcely might need a remark, much less an expression of surprise or complaint. The subject next in succession was that of dress. Here, too, the gentle critic must concede something to what makes a necessary part of a woman's business; and so I was very patient for a while. But, indeed, this subject so far outlived its predecessor, the remarks were so useless, the eagerness so disproportioned to the occasion, the importance attached to it so much too great, and the expenditure of thought on it

so very obvious, I began to be well-nigh weary of my listening, when it diverged a little from dress in the abstract, to dress in the application, and all the dresses of all the ladies in the parish, red, blue, and black, Sunday and working day, were numbered, described, and discussed.

But woe to him whose discontent would have a change at any rate, before he knows for what! From the dress we passed to the persons, and from the persons to the affairs, of others. What was before but useless, now became mischievous. Words were repeated, tales were told, surmises were whispered, peculiarities were mimicked, falsehoods were circulated, and truths were ridiculed. The only hope that promised some limit to the evil circulated was, that as all talked at once, no one could receive much impression from what another said. But I, the silent Listener, did—for I observed that one in particular was so addicted to exaggeration, that if she told a truth, it became a falsehood on her lips—another was so possessed with the image of self, that even in talking of others, she never failed to push in the *I* and the *me* at every sentence, either by the way of comparison, or simile, or illustration—and another was so, if not envious, at least censorious, that she replied with a *but* to every the least suggestion of merit, or palliation of demerit, in another—in a fourth, I remarked that her opinion changed so rapidly, in one thing only was she decided, that of differing from whoever happened to be heard last—another was so absolutely certain of every thing, one was almost constrained to believe her an eye-witness of all that had passed in the three kingdoms since she was born, and for twenty years before. But no one more displeased me than a little lady, who could assume everybody's countenance, mimic everybody's tone of voice, and caricature everybody's manners.

Full two good hours more had elapsed before the conversation had progressed through all these shades of subject, and there came a transition for which I could not well account; it having arisen in a corner whence I could not distinctly hear amid the tumult. But suddenly it seemed

to me, from certain words I caught, that my young party were speaking of religion. I was not long in doubt how the conversation might have passed from things so frivolous to a theme so important ; for I was soon doomed to know that the frivolity of talk does not depend upon its subject. These young critics were talking, indeed, of preachers, and of sermons, and of last Sunday's congregation, and who was there, and who ought to have been there and was not. And one minister was compared with another, and one extolled, and the other depreciated. And the last sermon at their parish church, which seemed to be tolerably well remembered, was closely criticised—one liked this part, and one did not like that part, and some ridiculed and even mimicked the peculiarities in the expression and manner of the preacher. And then the mistakes and inconsistencies of all the religious people in their circle of acquaintance were hinted and wondered at, and very conscientiously bewailed. It was a point as difficult, indeed, as it seemed to be important, to determine, amid conflicting opinions, who amongst them were to be considered religious and who were not. And so they went on—But I forbore to listen. The night's increasing chillness warned me thence—and as I betook myself to my solitary home, I tried in vain to recall, of what I had heard, one single expression of feeling, one thought that bespoke reflection, one breathing of piety, cultivation, or good sense. Yet had I reason to believe the young persons possessed all these—they had been carefully, politely, and religiously educated—they knew much, and probably felt much—Why then was it so ? From habit simply—habit unresisted by others when they were younger, and now unresisted by themselves, growing every year more inveterate, shortly to become too difficult to conquer. Dispersed in society where good sense, piety, and intellect, give the tone to the discourse, these young people would be found silent, reserved, and embarrassed, wishing in vain they had words in which to clothe their thoughts, or courage to express their feelings, and ask elucidation of their doubts. And their minds must have more than the ordinary power

of resistance, if they come not eventually to prefer the company of the trifling, the frivolous, and the senseless.

Meantime the Oracle of Wisdom has declared, "The thought of foolishness is sin." What sin, then, in its habitual and confirmed expression, become by habit the language of our lives ! What sin in the perversion of that power whose use is unlimited in good—in telling forth the praises of God—in speaking comfort to the suffering—in giving information to those that know not—in adding the highest zest to intellectual pleasures—the most exquisite enjoyment to social intercourse ! Rational conversation is the means above all others calculated to correct our mental errors, to shame our selfish passions, to correct the false estimate we form of ourselves, and induce a liberal and benevolent consideration of the feelings of others. It is the genial fire applied from time to time, to save the heart from the icy coldness that steals upon it 'mid the selfish occupations of the world. It is the overflow of feelings too big for the bosom to hold and be at peace. It is the gentle consolation that neither age, nor sorrow, nor infirmity, forbids to us—the draught oblivious, in which suffering, the most poignant, can for a while forget itself—the offspring of confidence and love, better thriving on the hearth of domestic privacy, than in the sullen spendours of dissipation.

And is it even so, that of a gift like this, we make an instrument of folly—to dissipate every serious thought—to put to the blush every right feeling—to disseminate falsehood and mischief—wound others, and corrupt ourselves !



Doll Pig.

She for her humble sphere by nature fit,
Has little understanding and no wit,
Receives no praise ; but though her lot be such,
Toilsome and indigent, she renders much—
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true.

COWPER.



ALL who enter on the world are in pursuit of happiness ; each one questions of another where it is, or fancies he perceives it from afar ; but very few confess that

they have found it. The young, starting into life with sanguine hopes and spirits gay, expect it everywhere : the more experienced, having sought it long and found it not, decide that it is nowhere. The moralist tells us there is no such thing. The historian almost proves it by the miseries he details. Poverty says, It is not with me—and Wealth says, Not with me. Splendour dashes by the cottage door, heaves the rich jewel on her bosom with a sigh, and says the dwellers there are happier than she is. Penury looks out upon her as she passes, loathes her own portion, and silently envies what she must not share. Ignorance, with dazzled and misjudging eye, admires the learned, and esteems them happy. Learning decides that “ignorance is bliss,” and bewails the enlargement of capacity it cannot find enough to fill. Wherever we ask, the answer is still, “Seek further.” Is it so, then, that there is no happiness on earth ? Or if it does exist, is it a thing of circumstance, confined to certain states, dependent on rank and station—here to-day and gone to-morrow, in miserable dependence on the casualties of life ? We are often asked the question by those by whom the world is yet untried, who, even in the spring-time of their mirth, are used to hear the complaints of all around them, and well may wonder what they mean. We affect not to answer questions which never were answered yet—but we can tell a story of something that our ear has heard and our eye has seen, and that many besides can testify to be the truth. And well may we, who so often listen to what we like not, be allowed for once to tell a pleasant tale.

Distant something more than a mile from the village of Desford, in Leicestershire, at the lower extremity of a steep and rugged lane, was seen an obscure and melancholy hovel. The door stood not wide to invite observation ; the cheerful fire gleamed not through the casement to exite attention from the passenger. The low roof and outer wall were but just perceived among the branches of the hedge-row—uncultured and untrimmed—that ran between it and the road. As if there were nothing there that any one might seek, no way of access presented itself, and the step of curiosity that

would persist in finding entrance, must pass over mud and brier to obtain it. Having reached the door with difficulty, a sight presented itself such as the eye of delicacy is not used to look upon. It was not the gay contentedness of peasant life that poets tell of, and prosperity sometimes stoops to envy. It was not the labourer resting from his toil, the ruddy child exulting in its hard, scant meal, the housewife singing blithely at her wheel, the repose of health and fearlessness—pictures that so often persuade us happiness has her dwelling in the cabins of the poor. The room was dark and dirty—there was nothing on the walls but the bare beams, too ill joined to exclude the weather, with crevices in vain attempted to be stopped by rent and moulded paper. A few broken utensils hung about the room—a table and some broken chairs were all the furniture, except what seemed intended for a bed, yet promised little repose. The close and smoky atmosphere of the apartment gave to it the last colouring of discomfort and disease. Within there sat a figure such as the pencil well might choose for the portrait of wretchedness. Quite grey, and very old, and scarcely clothed, a woman was seen sitting by the fire-place, seemingly unconscious of all that passed around her. Her features were remarkably large, and in expression harsh—her white hair, turned back from the forehead, hung uncombed upon her shoulders—her withered arm, stretched without motion on her knee, in form and colouring seemed nothing that had lived—her eye was fixed on the wall before her—an expression of suffering, and a faint movement of the lip, alone giving token of existence.

Placed with her back towards the door, she perceived not the intrusion, and while I paused to listen and to gaze, I might have determined that here at least was a spot where happiness could not dwell—one being, at least, to whom enjoyment upon earth must be forbidden by external circumstance—with whom to live was of necessity to be wretched. Well might the Listener in such a scene as this be startled by expressions of delight, strangely contrasted with the murmurs we are used to hear amid the world's abundance. But

it was even so. From the pale shrivelled lips of this poor woman we heard a whispering expression of enjoyment, scarcely articulate, yet not so low but that we could distinguish the words, "Delightful," "Happy."

As we advanced with the hesitation of disgust into the unsightly hovel, the old woman looked at us with kindness, but without emotion, bade us be seated, and, till questioned, shewed very little inclination to speak. Being asked how she did, she at first replied, "Very ill," then hastily added, "My carcass is ill—but I am well, very well." And then she laid her head upon a cold, black stone, projecting from the wall beside the fire-place, as if unable to support it longer. We remarked that it was bad weather. "Yes," she answered—then hastily correcting herself—"No, not bad—it is God Almighty's weather, and cannot be bad."—"Are you in pain?" we asked—a question scarcely necessary, so plainly did her movements betray it. "Yes, always in pain—but not such pain as my Saviour suffered for me—His pain was worse than mine—mine does not signify." Some remark being made on the wretchedness of her dwelling, her stern features almost relaxed into a smile, and she said she did not think it so; and wished us all as happy as herself. As she shewed little disposition to talk, and never made any remark till asked for it, and then in words as few and simple as might express her meaning, it was slowly and by reiterated questions that we could draw from her a simple tale. Being asked if that was all the bed she had on which to sleep, she said she seldom slept, and it was long that she had not been able to undress herself—but it was on that straw she passed the night. We asked her if the night seemed not very long. "No—not long," she answered—"never long—I think of God all night, and when the cock crows, am surprised it comes so soon."—"And the days—you sit here all day, in pain and unable to move—are the days not long?"—"How can they be long? Is not He with me? Is it not all up—up?" an expression she frequently made use of to describe the joyful elevation of her mind. On saying she passed much time in prayer, she was asked

for what she prayed. To this she always answered, "Oh ! to go, you know—to go—when He pleases—not till He pleases." To express the facility she found in prayer, she once said, it seemed as if her prayers were all laid out ready for her in her bed. But time would fail us to repeat the words, brief as they were, in which this aged saint expressed her gratitude to the Saviour who died for her—her enjoyment of the God who abode with her—her expectations of the heaven to which she was hastening—and perfect contentedness with her earthly portion. It proved on inquiry to be worse than it appeared. The outline of her history, as gathered at different times from her own lips, was this :—

Her husband's name was Peg ; her own being Mary, she was usually known by the appellation of Poll Peg, and had been long remembered in the village, as living in extreme poverty, and going about to beg bacon at Christmas time. Her youth had been passed in service of various kinds ; and though she did not know her age, it appeared from public events which she remembered to have passed when she was a girl, that she could not be less than eighty. Later in life she had kept sheep upon the forest hills, and, in the simplicity of her heart, would speak of her days of prosperity when she had two sheep of her own. She could not read—but from attending divine service had become familiar with the language of Scripture, and knew, though hitherto she did not regard, the promises and threatenings it contains. We know nothing of her previous character ; that of her husband and family was very bad—but we are not informed that hers was so. The first earnest religious feeling she related of herself was felt some short time previous ; when walking alone in the fields, she bethought herself of her hard fate—a youth of toil, an old age of want and misery—and if she must go to hell at last, how dreadful was her portion ! Struck with the appalling thought, she knelt down beneath the hedge to pray—the first time, perhaps, that heartfelt and earnest prayer had gone up to heaven from her lips.

Not very long after this, as we understand, the old woman

was taken ill, and unable to move from the straw, at that time her only bed, in a loft over the apartment we have described—where, little sheltered by the broken roof, and less by the rags that scarcely covered her, she lay exposed to the inclemencies of the weather, without money to support or friend to comfort her. It was in this situation that her mind, dwelling probably on the things that in health passed by her unregarded, received the strong and lasting impression of a vision she thought she beheld, probably in a dream, though she herself believed that she was waking. In idea she saw the broad road and the narrow as described in Scripture. In the broad road, to use her own expressions, there were many walking ; it was smooth and pleasant, and they got on fast—but the end of it was dark. On the narrow road she herself was treading, and some few others—but the way was rugged—some turned back, and others sat down, unable to proceed. She herself advanced till she reached a place more beautiful, she said, than anything to which she could compare it. When asked what it was like, she could not say, but that it was very bright, and that there were many sitting there. Being questioned who these were, she said they were like men, but larger and more beautiful, and all dressed in glitterings—such was her expression—and one was more beautiful than the rest, whom she knew to be the Saviour, because of His readiness and kindness in receiving her. But the most pleasing impression seemed to be left by the Hallelujahs this company were singing. She was told by Him she knew to be the Saviour that she must go back for a little time, and then should come again to dwell with them for ever.

Thus ended her vision, but not so the impression it made. The recollection of the scene she had witnessed, and of the bliss that had been promised her, was the source of all her happiness. Turning her eye from earth to heaven, and fixing all her thoughts on that eternity to which she was hastening, it left her, not what she before had been, wretched on earth and unmindful of anything beyond, but with a heart deeply impressed with the love and mercy of God, fully and un-

doubtedly relying on her Saviour's promise, and proving the reality of those feelings by earnest devotion, and most cheerful acquiescence in her Maker's will. It was not the fervour of a first impression—the enthusiasm of an excited imagination. She survived six or seven years; but time made no change on her feelings. She passed those years in the extreme of poverty, dependent on the alms of some few persons who knew and visited her: she passed them in pain and helplessness; mocked and ill-treated by her husband and her sons, and insulted often by her unfeeling neighbours, who came to laugh at her devotion, and ridicule her hopes. For these, as well as for some who visited her for kinder purposes, she had but one answer—she wished them all like her; prayed that they might only be as happy as herself. When told what she had seen was a mere dream and a delusion, she said it did not signify to tell her that—she had seen it, and it was the recollection of it that made her nights so short and her days so happy. "And what does it signify," she added, "that they swear at me, and tell me I am a foolish old woman—don't I know how happy I am?" During the many years that she survived, the minister of the parish saw her constantly, and found little variation in her feelings, none in her firm adherence to the tale she at first had told, and the persuasion that what she had seen was a blessed reality, sufficient to make her happy in every extreme of earthly wretchedness. And he saw her die, as she had lived, in holy, calm, and confident reliance on her Saviour's promise.

To what I have written, I could find much to add, having notes of all that passed during the protracted years of this devoted woman's life. But my purpose was not to make a story. I have witnessed only to what I saw, and repeated only what my ear has listened to. And I have repeated it but to prove that the happiness which all men seek, and most complain they find not, has sometimes an abode where we should least expect to find it. This is an extreme case—extreme in mental enjoyment as in external misery. But it is true. And if it be so, that a being debarred the com-

onest comforts of life, almost of the light and air of heaven, suffering, and incapable even to clothe herself, or cleanse her unsightly dwelling, could yet pass years of so much happiness, that her warmest expression of gratitude to her benefactors was to wish them a portion as happy as her own—what are we to say to those who, amid the overflow of sublunary good, make the wide world resound with their complainings? How are we to understand it, that, while blessings are showered around us as the summer rain, there is so little real happiness on earth? Because we seek it not aright—we seek it where it is not—in outward circumstance and external good, and neglect to seek it, where alone it dwells, in the close chambers of the bosom. We would have a happiness in time independent of eternity—we would have it independent of the Being whose it is to give; and so we go forth, each one as best we may, to seek out the rich possession for ourselves. Those who think they are succeeding will not list our tale. But if there be any who, having made a trial of the world, are disposed to disbelieve the existence of what they seek—if there be any among the young who start at the report, and shrink from the aspect of their already clouded prospects, we would have them hear a brighter tale. There is happiness upon earth. There is happiness for the poor and for the rich; for the most prosperous and the most desolate. There is happiness, but we will not have it.



Truth.

So much of the happiness of social life is derived from the use of language, and so profitless would the mere power of language be but for the truth that dictates it, that the absence of the confidence which is placed in our declarations may not merely be in the highest degree injurious to the individual, but would tend, if general, to throw back the whole race of mankind into that barbarism from which they have emerged.—Dr BROWN.



ALKING one morning in the garden at an hour when there is little to listen to, except the small twittering of the wakeful lark, the distant footsteps of the cattle, and the coarse voices of their drivers preparing to go forth to their labour, I desired at least to hear, what all who listen may, a word of truth from the still voice of nature. There is so striking an affinity between the moral and the natural world, resembling consequences so surely resulting from resembling causes, one might imagine the world of things inanimate had been formed and framed but as a picture to shew forth what is passing within us, and warn us of the things that affect our moral welfare: a fable, as it were, of which we are to find the moral, and apply it to ourselves. There is scarce a moment of our lives in which, if we be pleased to pause and look around, we may not learn a use-

ful lesson from something that is passing among the natural objects that encompass us.

The garden that morning was very gaily dressed—the Moss-rose drooped its head, overladen with the weight of dew that was upon it, more beautiful in its tears than when opening in full splendour to the mid-day sun. The pale Lily, scentless and colourless, seemed in its spotless purity to shun the charms that embellished other flowers. And the Pink, and the gay Pansy, and numberless others, were there, all ranged in correct and beautiful order, unmixed with any noxious or unsightly weed: except that on one single spot I marked the first germ of something that did not seem to be a flower, and yet, having no distinct form, could not well be determined to be a weed. I paused a moment in thought to pull it up—But what harm was there in it? It bore but two small leaves, and why not let it grow? And so it grew—and in a few weeks it spread far and wide its rank, luxuriant branches—the flowers that crept upon the soil were smothered beneath it, while its taller neighbours were encompassed by its leaves. And each morning as I renewed my walk, I marked the growth of the unsightly weed, spreading farther and farther to mar the neatness and beauty of the border. Its roots had mingled with the roots of the tender flowers, its branches had interwoven with their branches, and it would now be a task of difficulty to part them without injury.

And on the last morning that I walked there, I bethought myself of what this weed might resemble, that from so small and innocent a beginning, had grown into such speedy and abundant mischief. Alas! there were many things that it resembled but too closely. Many were the vices that came into my mind as the results of early indulgence—But in as much as this garden had been richly cultivated and fairly kept, and but for the rapid growth of this neglected weed, had seemed almost without a blemish, there was one thing in particular it seemed to me to resemble; for I had known that vice to subsist in minds of considerable cultivation, and

hide itself under very highly-polished manners ; the single blemish of an else fair character.

As the ground, accursed for our sake, when left unwatched, brings forth the poisonous weed, so the human heart, if unchecked in its propensities, will bring forth evil—but none, perhaps, so spontaneously as falsehood. There seems to be from earliest infancy a disposition to it, and it is generally the first great fault a child becomes guilty of.

Falsehood in its grosser form, is so palpable a sin, and so revolting, that we need say nothing here to prove it so. The full-grown weed not any one would spare, could they find means to root it out. But the weed was a weed before it seemed so, and the poison was already in its root. And so are there forms of falsehood that excite no disgust, and create but small alarm, if any, when first detected in the character—nay, are too often fostered and encouraged.

Had Anna told a direct falsehood in her infancy, she would have been corrected with seriousness—the guilt of it would have been made plain to her, and every proper means employed to prevent a recurrence of the fault. But no one gave heed to the slight inaccuracies into which she was betrayed by a lively imagination and a hurried mode of expression—her mistakes excited mirth, and were not seldom repeated in her presence, as proofs of wit or subjects of amusement. So welcome a lesson was promptly learned, and what was at first carelessness soon became design. The plain and simple truth gained no attention ; a very little exaggeration would make mirth for herself and her companions. In all this Anna meant no sin—and during her childhood, perhaps, it scarcely might amount to sin, because it deceived no one and injured no one. But the rank weed grew apace. From exaggerating by design, she grew so accustomed to it, that it became almost impossible to her to speak literally. One hour was, by her reckoning, always three—five hundred stood for twenty—every rood was a mile, and every common accident a marvel, if not an impossibility. These may seem trifles, and so perhaps they were—but they did not long continue so—The prattle of the

child grew into the converse of the woman—and where was then the truth too sacred to be sacrificed to Anna's wit? The words of others distorted, their actions misconstrued, and their affairs misstated, to make them ridiculous and herself amusing. From exaggeration to invention is but a pass imperceptible—no matter who was wronged or who deceived—habit had absorbed the sense of wrong, and a laugh had become the price current for a lie. These lies, perhaps, were not meant to injure—but every falsehood may injure, whatever be intended. Anna, at first, gave pain without knowing it. But she could not stop here. There are occasions in every one's life where a falsehood may serve our present interests—where a falsehood may gratify our resentment, may shield us from disgrace, or secure us a triumph over those who contend with us. Would Anna pause when these occasions came? Would she, who told falsehoods daily without a motive, hesitate when it could serve some important purpose? When passion was excited and interest at stake, would she, for the first time in her life, stop to consider the criminality of saying what was not true? No—Anna will surely tell at last, if it serves her purpose, the most injurious and deliberate falsehood.

Now, however the world may join in with the laugh, however willingly the idle may listen and the thoughtless applaud, such a character is not esteemed. The gay and the giddy may seek them when they would be amused, but friendship takes them not to her bosom—feeling holds no communion with them—sorrow asks of them no comfort—wisdom takes with them no counsel—candour, simplicity, and good sense, shrink instinctively from their touch. However brilliant, and however entertaining, however innocent, even in intention, the person whose words are habitually not true, is lowered in the scale of moral creatures—their opinions have very little weight, their testimony is but little regarded, and their sincerity but rarely trusted: even though they were never yet guilty of a mischievous deception. But we must look higher than this. There is One above us who Himself is Truth, and to whom all that is not, must be hate-

ful. He has promised to bring into judgment every idle word, and has already passed sentence upon the guilt of "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Surely they are dangerous weapons these to make us sport with. With the utmost caution we may use, we shall not escape the condemnation, should He be extreme to mark our words. There is so much deception in our hearts, that we rarely even know the truth exactly ; and there is so much temptation to disguise or discolour it, that perhaps scarce a day goes by us in which we are not betrayed into some evasion. The weed is too surely indigenous to the soil, and every hour that we spare to check its growth, we spare an enemy that will spoil the lustre of our garden. The best, and the sweetest, and the purest in moral loveliness, will be attainted by its unhallowed touch.

Early let us go to our garden, and look if the small gerr be there—and every morning return to see if it be coming. And mark well the manner of its growth. It does not come at once, a bold and mischievous falsehood. Being in society we hear something that hurts or offends us—desiring that another should share our indignation or redress our wrong, we add to it, perhaps, no more but an aggravative tone. It is but wounded feeling, or just abhorrence of sin : True—but it is falsehood. Walking by the way-side, we meet an object of distress—anxious to interest others for their sake, we exaggerate the picture of suffering, or conceal its alleviation. Our motive is but benevolence : True—but it is falsehood. We have been witness to some incident, or listened to some recital—a very little embellishment will make it highly marvellous, and excite interest or afford amusement—no one can be harmed by it : True—but it is still falsehood. Well, the weed is fair and green—shall we let it grow on another day ? We have committed some fault—if we confess it, we shame ourselves for ever, and sink in the esteem of those we love. A falsehood for this time will conceal it, and we will do the wrong no more. True—but another sin, and probably a greater, is added to the first, and He who knows all is left out of the account. Being innocent, we have been wronged,

or we have been the unwilling occasion of wrong ; by a falsehood, mischief may be prevented—With no other defence in our power, we may surely prevent crime, and secure ourselves from injury. But this is no more than to choose to ourselves the culprit's part, and, being innocent, voluntarily to claim guilt on our behalf—It is better to suffer innocent, than guilty to escape. We are brought unawares into a situation in which, if the truth be not denied, we shall seem unkind, ungrateful, insincere. We know that we are not so, though appearances are against us ; falsehood becomes here but the servant of truth—we use it only to prevent mistake. Methinks our fatal weed is growing now apace. That which at first seemed the handmaid of generous feeling, hath passed over to the service of self—not yet, it is true, to serve any evil propensity or indulge any culpable desire. It seems but a fair background to set off our flowers. Let it grow on. Hard service truly has that propensity which once is enlisted to wait on the selfish interests of man. Envy, jealousy, and emulation, anger, resentment, and revenge, ambition, vanity, and pride—all these make a part of human selfishness, and claim to be served in their turn. The weapon is in a hand well practised to its use. When better feeling predominates, the use of it seems to be for good. But when passion surprises us, can the well-practised hand forbear the ready weapon ? Envy can, by a word of falsehood, bear down its proud superior—emulation can, by a falsehood, pass over the head of its rival—revenge can sate itself, anger can safely spend itself in falsehood—pride, and vanity, and ambition may be served by it. And thus we have the weed full grown ! We may use it oftener or seldom, as the temptation arises, or as passion impels—but that we shall use it when occasion urges, is not doubtful. And who now can tell the deformity of the weed we have spared ? It may misrepresent the most pure intention, it may blight the fairest character, it may attaint the holiest mind, bring ridicule on the most sacred truths, betray the most generous trust, destroy all confidence and honest intercourse in society, and provoke and insult that high, holy, and om-

niscient Being, whom nothing can deceive, and who will bear with no deception.

Faintly we have sketched the mischiefs, and faintly described the manner of the growth—We have given some examples, but they are a few among a thousand. We warn you of the danger of the first departure from truth—of the playful brandishing of so dangerous a weapon. This much, at least, must be acknowledged—falsehood is sin—sin can never be a trifle or a jest.



Christmas Time.

O nuit bienheureuse, en laquelle est né le Christ, le Seigneur, je te trouve beaucoup plus claire et plus resplendissante que tous les beaux jours de l'année ; car tu as été éclairée de ce bel soleil d'en haut, au regard duquel le soleil même n'est que ténèbres ! Bienheureuse nuit, en laquelle on chante le triomphe dans le ciel, et on publie la paix en terre aux hommes, auxquels Dieu prend son bon plaisir !—DRELINCOURT.



FIN every period of nature's story, attached to every creed, and making a part of every mode of worship, religious festivals of some kind have been observed ; and they have for the most part worn a character not ill-becoming the Deity in whose honour they were held. The Greek kept his festival with arms in hand, and in doing honour to his warrior gods, could find no fitter celebration than games of agility and feats of strength. The more savage Roman, in whose hard bosom inhumanity was the proudest virtue, feasted his deities with gladiatorial sights. The dark Indian, not very much mistaking the spirit he serves, holds festivals in honour of the Devil, in which his scalped and tortured enemies make at once the offering and the sport. While to his obscene, unholy gods, the unchaste Hindoo holds feasts of infamy, pollution, and dishonour.

Far other festival was theirs, who, mid the darkness of

an idolatrous world, were taught to serve the God of truth and love. They kept their Passover with fasting and prayer. In the year of Jubilee, the oppressed had restitution, and the prisoner went free. Where superstition overclouds our holy faith, the religious festivals have assumed a like character. Saints and martyrs who have come in to share their Maker's glory and divide His worship, have all their festivals ; and if we note the idle pomp, and useless offerings, and heartless ceremonies, with which they are celebrated, we must confess them not ill-suited to deities of earth, introduced with worse than Pagan polytheism, into the worship of the Christian Church.

Restored, in profession at least, to the simplicity of the gospel faith, disencumbered of all that man had intermixed with the spiritual worship demanded of us from God—forming their church, whether Episcopal or otherwise, on that which they believe to be the scripture model, Protestants have left their religious anniversaries but few and simple. Christmas and Easter are the two great festivals of their year—the latter only partially observed ; the former, we believe, universally. How do we keep it ? As suitably to our profession as the Hindoo to his ? As much in accordance with the character of Him we serve, as the Olympic games with the battle-loving gods of Greece ?

It was thus I questioned myself, as one evening I sat pensive and alone, close on the hearth of my solitary chamber. No one was nigh to answer to my doubts. I trimmed my candle, and stirred my fire, and listened as if something should bring me a reply. Silence, indeed, there was not—for there was a sound within of eager footsteps passing to and fro. But what had I to do with that ? And there was a noise of carriage-wheels without ; but what had that to do with the subject of my thoughts ? The books that lay crowded on my table were my sole companions. Could I not question them ? I opened one, and it said, When the wise men beheld the star that announced the Saviour's birth, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy ; and when they found Him, they fell down and worshipped Him. And it said again,

that when that birth in Bethlehem was announced, there appeared a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men !

On earth and in heaven, then, this season was a season of rejoicing ; and we keep it in memory of an event the most important that ever happened in this nether world—so important, that exulting angels shared the triumph of the news they brought. We keep it in honour of Him who on earth despised the pomps and vanities of life, disowned the turbulence of earthly passion, turned aside from the paths of idleness and folly, and spoke with His sacred lips full many an awful “Woe” on all who loved them. His holy soul was bent on other purposes—His eyes wept tears of pity for the world’s insensibility—His heart was rent and broken for its sins—and His hallowed spirit at last surrendered, to purchase manumission for the bond-slaves of the earth, and make them heirs of bliss eternal. And now in heaven He sits in unspotted purity enthroned, watching with eye compassionate the people He has loved on earth, to save them from the dangers and temptations that encompass them ; to win their hearts to penitence, and faith, and love.

And what to us was that event we celebrate ? What share have we in the joy that was proclaimed in heaven at His coming ? Ruined, lost, degraded, and condemned, His coming was to us, if it was anything, pardon, and peace, and restoration to the favour and the likeness of God. The deepest humiliation that such an interference was needed, the most exalted joy that our need was thus provided—joy, greater than when the captive is set free—joy, greater than when the sentenced criminal is pardoned, becomes us at this season. But what joy ? When we celebrate the memory of one we love, we tell fondly of his deeds—we bring to mind things that had nearly stolen from our thoughts—we repeat his sayings—bring forth each valued memento of his love—seek the scenes and renew the employments that best remind us of him ; if he has been renowned for anything, our music, our decorations and our sports bear all some reference to his

character or his doings. Christmas is the celebration of our Saviour's birth. When angels told it, they gave glory to God on high. When wise men heard it, they fell down and worshipped. When Christians celebrate it, they—I had not time to finish all I might have said of chastened gaiety, of warm and humble gratitude, of pious recollections, joyful praises, and confiding prayers, when a great increase of noises called off my attention to what was passing beyond the precincts of my solitude.

Our Christmas festival is not confined to the single day set apart by our Church for religious service. The season of rejoicing we usually call Christmas extends to the length of weeks, distinguished from all others in the year by frequent festivities peculiar to itself, especially among the younger part of the community, to whom it is usually a time of holiday and domestic indulgence. And I soon perceived this was one of those nights which peculiarly develop what we mean by Christmas-time; and I recollect, besides, that it was the New-year's Eve, a night of no common distinction among the distinguished. What a happy opportunity to solve my previous doubts, and set my mind at rest! I went out of my chamber in haste, to listen what might be passing. As I drew nigh to the spot, to which a glare of lights and a sound of music attracted me, I saw many an airy figure passing and repassing in the distance. I drew near—but why need I pause to describe it? Who does not know what is meant by a children's ball at Christmas? Many a beautiful little creature, whose cheek in the morning had been flushed with health, was already paling in the midnight glare—their glistening eyes and panting bosoms betrayed an unnatural excitement, while their unclothed and fragile limbs already moved with listlessness and languor. I thought the glittering trinkets on their bosoms did but attaint their purity, and their splendid and fantastic dresses transform the most exquisite of nature's works into the likeness of the mimic puppet-show. But they, it seems, thought otherwise, and so did the parents and elder spectators who lined the circumference of the ball-room. The

beauty of one, and the elegance of another, and the dress of a third, engrossed all eyes, and set all tongues in motion. On one pale cheek I saw the blush of mingled modesty and pride grow deeper and deeper as repeated words of admiration met her ear. I saw a second, whom Christmas balls had already cured of that first weakness, send her bright eyes round in search of the admiration at which she blushed no longer. I traced in some the restlessness of envy, the skulk of inferiority, and the languor of perceived neglect. In none—no, not in one of all that fairy crowd, saw I the calm of innocence or the simplicity of childhood. Unnatural exultation, or premature depression, was the expression of every countenance there. Meantime the fête went on. They looked at their watches—I looked at mine, and perceived they were preparing for the midnight hour. 'Tis well, I said, to note it; for at its sounding another year is stricken off from their short tale of life. Of the threescore years—perhaps of the twenty—or the ten—it may be not half of that, granted them by the Creator to give Him glory and make ready for eternity, here is one more numbered off, and gone to make report in heaven of its use. How much of gratitude they owe for all the happiness in that year enjoyed—how much regret for all the errors and neglects with which they stained it—what remembrance, what love of Him, without whose birth on earth, at this season celebrated, each closing of the year would be but the signal of approaching and eternal misery! How much humility and holy awe at the thought that even now it may possibly be so! It is a moment of no common interest. The year is closed—its pleasures can no more be enjoyed, its wasted moments can no more be used, the deeds that were done in it cannot be recalled, its dangers are escaped and its sufferings are over—very brief has it been, and the one that succeeds it will be no longer. Our last it may be—one less to us it must be.

Midnight struck. The music became louder and gayer than before—the dance went on with redoubled energy—every cheek glowed, and every eye kindled—old and young, all were now engaged—my eye searched every feature, to find

if one of all these thoughts were written there—forgetfulness, absolute inebriation as to every rational recollection, was all the expression I could trace—a senseless joy because a year they had misused was gone, and another they meant to misuse was come, and the eternity they had forgotten was brought nearer, and the life they delighted in was receding. How long the intoxication lasted, I cannot say, for I withdrew to my chamber to reflect on what had passed.

This, then, is the festival Christians hold in honour of their God—in remembrance of that meek and suffering Lord!—Remembrance, alas! who remembered Him in that gay room? Was not their object rather to forget Him? How dissonant to their ears would have come the mention of His name—how little appropriate any emblem of His love—how almost profane to have made mention of His deeds or reference to His character!—Remembrance! Oh! if there had come, indeed, to any bosom there, a recollection of the meaning of Christmas, of the stable where the Holy Babe slept for our sakes on the cold manger—of the meanness and contempt with which the Son of the Most High in mercy clothed Himself—the life of sorrow to which He was at this season born—how meek, how holy, and yet how wronged—by ourselves how much neglected and forgotten—surely the thought had marred their gaiety, and put to shame their strange festivity!

Was this forgetfulness the glory angels sung? Was this indifference the worship wise men offered? Yet thus we teach our children to celebrate the birth-time of their Saviour. Instead of the innocent, domestic treat, the game of healthful play, the holiday sweetened by previous industry, the useful or amusing present, things that formerly would constitute their Christmas gambols, it is the seed-time now for implanting every sinful feeling and unholy passion. Pride, and vanity, and rivalry, and envy, are to be awakened, time wasted, health impaired, and spirits exhausted. Many a long day expended, in thought at least, about the dress they are to wear; many another in weariness and languor, and disgust of less exciting occupations; atten-

tion untimely called to the advantage of personal attractions ; a false estimate induced of the comparative value of internal and external excellence. These are the evils now, without which so many of our young people cannot pass a happy Christmas—cannot celebrate—how strange the distortion !—the love and mercy of that holy Being to whom the very touch of evil is most hateful ; who turns aside His head from the first movement of that sin which bound His sacred brow with thorns. He to whose glory and service our time, and thoughts, and health, and spirits are due, is to be honoured at this season by the more than usual want and perversion of them all. He to whose memory the fêtes are held, is to be more totally forgotten, if possible, at this season than in all the year besides. The expression of our joy may be the ball, the theatre, the rout—any thing, in short, so it have no reference to that which is our professed cause of rejoicing. We must be happy, because it is Christmas, the time of our Saviour's birth into the world—but do not remind us of the circumstance, lest it make us sad.

Would we have no rejoicing then ? While heathens rejoice in their Apollo or their Vishnu, are Christians to go all the year in weeds of penitence, with mournful and downcast looks ? No season of peculiar joy and exultation ? Nay, surely not. Let Christmas be the happiest season of the year—there is much reason that it should—let the poor have their sober feasts and our children their glad holidays. But let us not be more inconsistent than heathens are, excluding from our feasts the thought of Him we affect to celebrate, and offering Him only what we know He loathes.

Would we know what are consistent and what are inconsistent modes of rejoicing at such a season, methinks mere common sense might tell us. We need be at no loss to discover what amusement consists with the glad remembrance of our Saviour's coming, the circumstances, cause, and consequence of that event—with all the love and obedience we owe to Him because of it. We can surely discern what employment reminds us of Him, and what disposes us to forget Him : what, if He were yet on earth, He would consecrate

with a blessing, and what He would turn from with a keen reproof or a compassionating tear. Yes, we do know—our ignorance is a feint—we know very well when we are about a thing, whether we would rather that the eye of our God and Saviour were averted, and His ear deafened, or at least that nothing should remind us of His presence; or whether it is pleasing to us to think that He is near, checking our propensities to wrong, guarding us from ill, prospering our pursuits, and sanctifying our enjoyments. Whatever consists with the grateful remembrance and desired presence of our Saviour, is a fit amusement for the season—whatever excludes them cannot be so.

If we say that on these terms we can have no mirth, no amusement, and our children and our servants no enjoyment of their Christmas—then, in truth, I know not what to say, but that our children, and our servants, and ourselves, are in a strange case:—we cannot rejoice in our Saviour's coming, unless we may forget Him—we cannot keep His birth-time, unless we may offend Him. If this be so, we had better at least change the name of our festival, and the pretext for our festivities—for though we may be very glad it is the 25th of December, or the 6th of January, we are clearly not glad it is the day in which man's redemption was proclaimed from Heaven, or in which wise men fell down and acknowledged their infant King. There was a period in our country's history in which the same season of the year was kept in honour of Woden, or some Saxon god. In the North of England the common people still make a sort of little images at Christmas, which they call Yule Doos—this in modern language would be Christmas gods—a custom no doubt derived from their pagan ancestors; in them it is no idolatry, as they attach no meaning to it whatever, and only do it because it always has been done. But let us look to ourselves, lest, under a Christian name, we but keep the heathen's feast; serving therein some god of our own devising; doing honour to time and sense, and the world, and ourselves—to every thing but Him by whose holy name we call our unholy sports.

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The butler desired me, with a very grave face, not to venture myself in it after sunset, for that one of the footmen had been almost frightened out of his wits by a spirit that appeared to him in the shape of a black horse without a head—to which he added, that about a month ago, one of the maids coming home late that way, with a pail of milk upon her head, heard such a rustling in the bushes that she let it fall.—ADDISON.



DO not desire to make great things of small, or to magnify into vices the little discrepancies of character that so incessantly blemish the moral prospect around us. Vice is one thing, folly is another. In their importance, no comparison can be made. Against vice, in its fairest and most delusive form, we hope we shall be found ever to protest, whatever sanction custom, fashion, or opinion may have given it. But there are some things which are not vices, which can-

not be called morally wrong, and which yet need to be reported of as follies, where the whisper of admonition may be timely heard. Next to being good, it is desirable to be agreeable—next to being virtuous, it is essential to be wise. When we have weeded our garden, we trim and prune our flowers to make them bloom the fairer. So if, in my silent wanderings through a noisy world, I make report of some things I have heard, that to my readers seem not to bear the

character of wrongs, I beg it may not be believed I thought them so, or listened to them with feelings no less painful than to some other things by which man is injured and the Deity offended. But we are not content to mix up the bitter wormwood in our dishes, because it is not the poisonous nightshade. Must we encourage a folly because it is not a vice, and torment each other and ourselves because it does injury to no one? Of the extent of the folly I leave the wise to judge ; of the grievousness of the torment, I presume to judge myself, having amply proved it, as I trust to make it appear.

It was my misfortune once to visit a family of people, very excellent, and very amiable, and for anything that I desire to say to the contrary, very wise in things of moment. Besides the mother, there were several young people of different ages, reaching from infancy almost to womanhood, all happy, all compliant, and all obliging—except when they happened to be assailed with what they were pleased to call fear—but as fear has always respect to danger, fancied, real, or possible, I should prefer to find some other name for it, because I can prove that it existed where danger was not possible, nor even by themselves apprehended. What influence these attacks had upon their own happiness it is hard to judge, because some people find their enjoyment in the miseries they create for themselves,—but they made woeful inroads on the enjoyments of others ; and for compliance, good-humour, and good-breeding, poor chance, indeed, had they to stand against the influence of these vehement emotions.

Though the hour was late, I had scarcely laid myself down to rest on the night of my arrival, ere I was aroused by the buzzing of voices, and the sound of soft, stolen footsteps in the adjoining gallery. The young ladies had been disturbed by extraordinary sounds, or such at least as would have been extraordinary, had not the hearing of them recurred every other night. One was afraid to go to bed, and another was afraid to get up—one could not come into her room, and another could not come out of it. Some thought-

they heard, and others were sure they heard, but nobody knew what. Nor was it easy to perceive the purport and end of the commotion—for no one made any attempt to ascertain the real ground of alarm; probably because they knew not where to look for it—or, more likely, because they were too much used to their own fears to expect to find any ground for them at all. And so, after much listening, and starting, and whispering, they were pleased at last to go to rest, and generously allowed me to do the same.

I ventured in the morning to suggest, that the indulgence of unreasonable fears was not the concomitant of a strong mind, and did in itself much tend to weaken it: that in the presence of real danger it unfits us for exertion, and in the absence of it, costs us as much suffering as the evil itself might do. I was answered by stories manifold and various, of things that had been, and things that might be; and the absolute certainty they still retained of having heard noises, though not one in their morning senses really supposed there had been anything to make the noise.

Willing to close a conversation I thought so little improving, I proposed to two of the younger girls to walk with me in the grounds. It was agreed to with pleasure; they were polite, cheerful, and obliging, till we had walked—must I own, not more than some few hundred yards?—when a small frog jumped out from the gross before us, and passed to the side of the path. A scream that might have startled even the insensible frog, broke from one of the young ladies, and they both protested they would go no farther on that path. It was in vain I represented to them that a frog is the most harmless of living things, having neither bite nor sting with which to wound; and that, moreover, whether it were harmless or harmful, it had taken itself willingly away from us. They replied only that it was a hideous, shocking creature, and frightened them to death. Equally in vain I urged my wish to reach the place to which that path would lead us—my wishes had no weight against their fears—they would not go, and excused them-

selves by saying they were dreadfully afraid of live things. We turned aside and took another path.—But alas! not far had we pursued it, when I saw upon the green turf, where it had untimely fallen, a sweet little bird already dead and cold, its pretty eye unclosed, and not a feather ruffled. I picked it up to admire it, when suddenly both my companions let go my arm, and stepped some paces back, protesting loudly that they were dreadfully afraid of dead things and should never like to walk that path again. Methought their path of life would scarce be easy, to whom the living and the dead were thus alike terrific.

We now pursued our walk, but soon in utter hopelessness, on my part, of anything like comfort or enjoyment. If we were to cross a meadow there was a cow, or at least a horse in it—whichever way we turned my companions saw a man or a dog—and when there was neither man nor dog, nor anything else, alive or dead, the way was so lonely they were afraid to go forward. They could not sit in the shade, lest the inhabitants of the bushes should descend on their head—they could not sit in the sun lest the winged insects should settle on their clothes. If I presented them with a flower, they let it fall, because they mistook the green leaf for a caterpillar. I wished them most heartily at home, and made what haste I could to rid myself of such troublesome companions.

But scarcely had we reached the house, when, for the promoting of the day's amusement, a drive was proposed to view some neighbouring ruins. It will be believed I was comforted to find my walking companions were to be changed for some a little older, to whom I hoped the live things and dead things might be less alarming. But, alas! we had now no need of either. When the carriage went up-hill, they were afraid it would run back; when it went down-hill, they were afraid it would run forward. If the horses ran slowly, they were sure they would never go on; if they went fast, they were sure they would never stop. The drive was romantic and beautiful in the extreme, but the ladies saw nothing except the ruts in the road. I attempted conversa-

tion, but was interrupted by a scream every time the carriage lost its exact perpendicular. And at last, when the ebullition of their fears could be forbore no longer, they insisted on stopping the carriage to inquire if the road was not very bad, and if it was safe to go forward. The former was too obvious to need the asking; the latter they were determined not to believe. When the carriage could not stop, they insisted upon getting out to walk, and then, having made the driver go slower and slower, till the fleet hours of day were nearly spent, they discovered that they should surely be benighted before their return, and of course be murdered, over and above having their necks broken by the badness of the road. These were certainly no pleasing anticipations; and, if I did not partake the imaginary ills, I was sufficiently tired of the real ones to oppose returning without the accomplishment of our purpose, and listened all dinner-time to assertions, proved and explained, of the absolute impossibility of reaching the place to which we had set out.

All dinner-time, did I say? It might have been so, had not an unhappy wasp presented itself with the sweets of the second course. There was other company besides myself at table, but that could not signify when a wasp was in the case. The servants were all put in requisition with tongs, poker, and shovel; the children started and jumped, and overset everything in their way; and the dinner remained to cool till the murder of the foe almost restored peace to the society;—but not quite, for one was still sure it would crawl. Having a little girl next me, of whose good sense I had on some occasions formed a favourable opinion, I ventured to ask her why she was so much afraid of a wasp. She replied, as I expected, because it might sting her. I asked her if she had ever been stung by one. She assured me she had, in endeavouring to drive it from the table, whence, had she left it alone, it would probably have gone of itself quite harmlessly. I asked her of the pain, and how long it lasted, and whether it was difficult to bear. Her answer implied, that though the pain was acute, it was short, and that the remainder of my question seemed to her ridiculous. I then

submitted it to her candour, whether, in the worst issue of the case—which, considering the number of wasps that fly, and the number of people who will not let them fly in peace, occurs but seldom—the quantity of pain was really equal to the quantity of fear she had betrayed ; and whether, in the certain anticipation of just so much pain by any other cause, she should have felt any fear at all ? She confessed that she should not ; because, as she sensibly remarked, a slight and temporary inconvenience from bodily pain was not worth a complaint, much less an anticipatory fear. But all this did not seem to her reason why she should not scream at the sight of a wasp. Nor, indeed, was it, as she gave me occasion to learn before the lapse of many hours ; for the entrance of a moth, that never yet in the memory of man was known to sting, created to the full as much commotion later in the evening,—so much, indeed, that most of the party retreated out of the room in the midst of our musical festivities, and left me to play to myself.

Well I know that ladies who have grown up in the indulgence of such fears, and have come at last to persuade themselves there is a degree of delicacy and refinement in them, must go on unto the end under the penalty due to their folly—that of tormenting themselves and annoying others. But as my whispers are for the ears of those with whom nothing is yet too late, I would represent to them the absolute inconsistency of such fears with good sense and a rational mind. All extravagance is folly ; because sound sense mainly consists in giving to things their due degree of importance, and proportioning the sentiment to the occasion that calls it forth. Fear, therefore, beyond the occasion, must be folly, even when some degree of danger exists ; and though, as a passion inherent to our nature, we cannot but be subject to it, we believe it will generally be found greater or less in proportion as the mind is strong or weak. The unreasonable indulgence of fear,—we speak now of that fear which has a real object and occasion,—is surely not consistent with the calm and humble trust we profess to repose in a superintending Providence, without whose knowledge

harm cannot by any means befall us. If it be urged that we ought to foresee and provide against danger,—that is true ; but fear, so far from accelerating this provident care, usually unfits us for using the means we have of avoiding or resisting evil : the courageous will escape, where the timid must inevitably suffer. But that sort of fear—if, for want of another term, we so must call it—which is our present subject of reprehension, has nothing whatever to do with danger : call it timidity, sensibility, or whatever we may, it is nothing but weakness and folly ; and we may depend upon it, that, being purely selfish, it is always unpleasing. It is constitutional in some minds, no doubt, more than in others ; but if we have a constitutional weakness of frame, we use all means to overcome it, and often with success—then why not so with this, our mental weakness ? But, in fact, much more depends on habit and education than on nature. Some children are absolutely taught it, and others are foolishly humoured in it, till it is no longer in their own power, or in the power of any one, to subdue it. I am certainly inclined to make an exception in those very extraordinary and wonderful cases of natural antipathy, of which the existence is too certain to be disputed, and too inscrutable to be understood —where an instinctive horror of some one particular thing gives such a keen perception of its presence as nothing can baffle or deceive. This, perhaps, it may be impossible to conquer. But this bears no analogy whatever to the multifarious fears, and horrors, and dislikes of which we have been speaking, by which reason and good sense are offended, selfishness fostered and indulged, and the feelings and convenience of others generally sacrificed to our own.

Addressing myself exclusively to my younger friends, I would induce them to consider that most of those living things for which they have conceived a horror are in themselves beautiful, and should be objects of our admiration. I believe there is not in the whole creation a thing that can properly be termed disgusting. It may be troublesome and annoying, if it obtrudes itself where comfort and cleanliness forbid its entrance, and may justly be removed, or, if neces-

sary, destroyed. But, in themselves, both reptiles and insects are most curiously and exquisitely wrought, and instead of shrinking from them with senseless horror, we may accustom ourselves to look at them with sensations of extreme pleasure, as the works of Him whose wisdom and power they manifest, and of whose bounty they partake, in the enjoyment of the existence He has bestowed on them. It is to some persons, and might be to all, if they would cultivate the feeling, a source of infinite delight to watch the swarms of insects that people the whole creation in the mid-day of a summer sun. There are those who receive as much pleasure from the insect that settles on their finger, as from the wild flower that blossoms under their feet. This complacent feeling in the contemplation of nature's living works, and that of persons who shrink from them with disgust, are merely habits of mind: the one may just as well be cultivated as the other.

In respect to the fear of accidents and injuries from our fellow-creatures, I believe the best cure for it is an abiding sense of the ever-present providence of God; and if we are constitutionally timid, we cannot better subdue it than by cultivating this consciousness of the Divine protection, in such a manner that it may recur to our minds on the first movement of alarm; in short, so as to become influential on our habits and sensations, and make a part of all our thoughts and feelings.

The Sabbath.

Is there a time when moments flow
More lovely than all beside?—
It is, of all the times below,
A Sabbath even in summer tide.

EDMESTON.



T was a Sabbath evening in the height of summer. The sun had been some half-hour gone, but his beams still lingered in the clear horizon, and still the fleecy cloud was tinged with a fading touch of red. The blue vault had not yet deepened into gray, nor the landscape become obscure in the growing twilight. And yet there was a mellowing tint upon the scene, that gave of softness what it stole of splendour—like the brilliant and gifted spirit that religion has chastened into stillness. The flower that had drooped, and the leaf that had withered in the noonday heat, were already recovered by the evening's freshness; while the thrush prolonged her song, and the redbreast lingered on the bough, as if unwilling to part from such a day. Peace and repose were the character of the scene, and fancy well might picture that the task of life was done, and all things ready for eternal rest.

In all there seemed a fitness for the day, and for the feelings with which I was returning from the evening service. The words of love and peace had dropped like holy balm

upon the bosom, and put to rest its agitating cares. Shame and contrition had sunk the soul too low for opposition, and mercy had won it into grateful acquiescence. At peace with God, because it had drunk deeply of His grace and truth—at peace with the world, because it seemed no longer worth contention—at peace with itself, because self was degraded and dethroned, the spirit partook of the evening's Sabbath hue, and only wished it could be always so. “And will it not be always so,” I thought, as I walked slowly homeward, “when our life's working-days are over, and the eternal Sabbath dawns upon our souls? A little while, and what is now but a brief foretaste, a passing semblance of celestial peace, will be an eternal and unchanging reality. A little while, and the smile of our Father will no more be averted, the world renounced will no more resume its power, and self submitted will no more rebel. And if there be such pleasure in an earthly Sabbath, interrupted as it is with our coldness, and carelessness, and earthliness, what will be the bliss of that eternal Sabbath for which we are preparing!” And then I considered the goodness of God in this institution, by which one day in seven is separated from the rest, to be employed in making happy what the occupations of the other six too often tend to make wretched, and to sanctify what they are too well fitted to corrupt. Prone as we are to sin, and subject as we are to sorrow, our most lawful occupations are fraught with anxiety and danger. What comfort, then, that there is one day in which it is our duty to neglect them, to forget them, and give up ourselves entirely to thoughts and pursuits of which the fruits are love, and holiness, and joy: to have nothing to do but to acquaint ourselves with God and be at peace! I passed the day-labourer in his clean white frock, his Bible and Prayer-book tucked under his arm, and thought how he must enjoy the repose of such a day, his only means of instruction, perhaps his only pause from effort and endurance. I overtook the pale mechanic, and fancied, from the expression of content upon his features, that he was telling over the stores of consolation he had gathered, to feed on in his close work-

shop all the week. The children of charity were tripping by my side, in their plain round bonnets and dark frocks, the bag of books on their arm, or the basket in their hand. I looked at them, and hoped something had that day been taught them that would sweeten the rude lot for which they were preparing. A little longer musing, and I should have persuaded myself the Sabbath was a day that all men love, and the calm of nature what all were sharing, and the song of gratitude what all were singing. But truth was at hand, and fancy must give place.

When I turned from the meadows into the public road, the passengers began to thicken on my path. The town had poured out her population in every direction for their evening walk, and the hills and the pathways were scattered thick with figures of various appearance, all well-dressed and neat, and seemingly free from care. There was nothing at first strongly to invade my previous feelings. I could still fancy that the poor labourer, or richer tradesman, was enjoying with his wife and children the beauties of creation and the grateful recollection of a day well spent: and in many a lowly hovel, as I passed it, I saw, in interesting group, the father attentively perusing his Bible, while the mother was setting out the plain spare supper, where everything looked clean once in the week at least. Truth might indeed have told, that some who enjoyed the leisure of the day had thought nothing of Him whose day it was, and some who were tasting of nature's charms felt nothing of gratitude to Him who gave them; but so much was not written on their brow; and they wore at least an air of enjoyment that became the hour.

Not so, when, proceeding a little further, I met the gay equipage returning from an evening drive—not so when I saw the light skiff, with sails unfurled, gliding merrily towards the shore. Whoever was within them, here was the day of God profaned by the direct breaking of His holy law. He had said, Remember that thou do it not—they did it, and boldly denied the harm. Whatever innocence might be assumed in those who took the pleasure, they were guilty

of the sin of those they taught and paid to pursue on the Sunday the occupation of the week, and unhallow in thought and deed the day that God made sacred. They would say, perhaps, they spent an hour in a recreation very harmless, and in no way inconsistent with their thoughts of holiness; but for their one hour of harmless recreation, others must toil many—the cattle that were used must be cleaned, the hand that plied the oar for them would ply for others, encouraged by their example. The words of God are plain and positive, and impossible to misconstrue; therefore the breach of them is a bold refusal to comply with His command, made openly in the face of earth and heaven. They would urge, no doubt, that they had enough kept holy the day, in going twice to the service appointed. Alas! if they had been there, it should almost seem to make their guilt the greater—for there they had heard the command enforced, and there they had prayed to be inclined to keep it, and thence they had returned resolved to break it, and deny the wrong.

The evening was closing fast—already the dark outline of form was all that remained distinct; and as I entered the town, the doors were closing and lights were beginning to gleam from every window. My pleasing reverie had been painfully dissipated—my mind was occupied in considering of the way in which Sunday evening is usually passed—and, presuming that when windows stand open, no secrets are passing within, I set myself to observe how people were employed in the various houses as I passed them; not without hope that I might gather something useful, in the way of warning or example for my readers.

I passed a window where noisy mirth bespoke the late dinner-party; where it was evident the company would not, and the domestics could not, remember it was the Sabbath—except in so far as they sighed in secret that decency allowed them not to dance or play at cards—but there I paused not. There was nothing doubtful among these. They, too, had been to church—themselves—but not their servants, who had this dinner to make ready. As soon as

they came forth from the sacred walls, they had passed with all speed from house to house to make their morning calls—I say not, to wipe off the serious impression of the service, for it had made none, but to get rid of the time till the bells should chime again. Unless they preferred a drive, they had gone a second time to church—they had plenty of time to dress for dinner, and then, thanks to this party, there was no more trouble about disposing of the hours till bed-time.

Neither did I stop long, where, in a more decent way, but with much the same purpose, a few friends had called in upon some other few, for the charitable purpose of passing away an evening on which they thought it right to be quiet and abstain from their weekly occupations, and yet found it very tedious. But I made a longer pause when I arrived under a window where there were clearly none present but the family that abode there, and it was pretty evident that no one had lost the recollection that it was the Sabbath. Knew I this from the smile of gratitude and heavenly peace that shone on their features? My readers shall judge. "I wish it were bed-time," said a little girl, not usually in haste to go to bed; "I am so tired of having nothing to do!" Though in truth she had risen two hours later than usual that morning.

"I think our clock must be too slow," replied her brother. "You know we were hardly dressed for breakfast when the bells began to ring this morning. It must be more than half-past nine;" and with a weary yawn he threw himself on the rug to play with the spaniel.

All were not alike unfortunate—for I observed a young lady at her writing-desk, folding and sealing as many letters as one can reasonably suppose she might have occasion to write in a week. How happy for her correspondents that one day in seven was a leisure day—a day on which the hours, being less valuable, could be better spared than on any other! As I could not see within the letters, I am bound in charity to suppose the subject of them was in unison with the feelings and previous occupations of 'the day. How should they be otherwise? A heart that, from

the rising till the going down of the Sabbath sun, had been in earnest devotion before God, had mourned in many a prayer the consciousness of sin, and grown light under the sweet assurance of its pardon—and had trembled at the awful denunciations pronounced on the dissembler, and been moved, amazed, overwhelmed with the contemplation of the Redeemer's love and the Father's fond forbearance—it was impossible that such a heart could turn immediately to common themes, the amusements of yesterday and the business of to-morrow, and the thousand trifles that bespeak a mind unoccupied by deeper interests. If I could not penetrate the letters to find where the heart had been, and where the thoughts, I was at least certain that they had been together, and that the language of the letters had gone after them ; and I felt much grief at a practice that could leave it doubtful whether they might not altogether have gone wrong. No common observer could know that a young lady who kept all her letters to write on a Sunday, did so that they might wear a deeper tone of piety, be the more faithful mirror of her better feelings, conveying greater good to others, and more glory to God. Common observers might even go so far as to suppose it was a profane compounding between her conscience and her choice—permitting her to send her spirit to scenes where in person she dared not go, and to occupy her thoughts with things she dared not do. I could not but bewail the bad example of a practice so equivocal, where the deed was plain to all, the inducement to it a secret between herself and God.

Reclining on a sofa opposite, I observed another lady intent upon the perusal of a newspaper. Therein, at least, was nothing equivocal ; for the contents of a newspaper are known to all ; and, doubtless, the mind that had been fed all day upon the high and holy things of heaven and eternity, must have found it a seasonable draught of temporalities to rid itself of the effects or impressions that might remain. I had some reason to doubt, from all I heard, whether this young lady would not have thought it wasting time to read the newspaper on a Monday, because she had so many other

things to do. But, on Sunday, alas!—on Sunday, on that day which is God's and not our own, it was a relief to find anything that might be done. And all together could not stay the weariness with which they turned their eyes towards the lagging timepiece, that seemed but to go the slower for their impatience to be rid of the day, which, though shortened at either hand, was still too long.

And yet these people, and thousands who do like them, are going, so they tell us, and take it but ill that we should doubt it, to that blessed dwelling-place where there is no employ but one, the very one of which they grow so weary here: where the utmost reach of happiness is no more but the completion and duration endless, of that which they are so little willing to begin—a rest from the agitating cares of time and sense, and a devoting of time, and thoughts, and powers to the worship of the Deity, the contemplation of His works, and the performance of His will. This is a happiness that is not for us here; we cannot reach it if we would. But that we may taste of it, that we may cultivate a desire and a liking to it, an imperfect Sabbath has been at certain intervals appointed us, in which we are permitted, nay, commanded, under all the penalties of disobedience, to take of the food on which our perfected spirits will eternally be fed, if the feast of heaven be preparing for us. The day comes round, and finds so little welcome, it is but an importunate intruder on our enjoyments, an interruption to our business. The food we are required to take is so unpalatable, we are obliged to mix with it as much as possible of our weekly fare to enable us to take it. So averse are we to this faint semblance of the eternal state, that not even the terrors of God's broken law can force us to partake of it. The aversion must be strong indeed that will make us risk so much by disobedience, rather than make the sacrifice of a few brief hours. And to what is it we are so averse? Let us consider.

friendship.

For Friendship is no plant of hasty growth;
Though rooted in Esteem's deep soil, the slow
And gradual culture of kind intercourse
Must bring it to perfection.

JOANNA BAILLIE.



HERE are a great number of things that everybody says for no reason that can be perceived, but because everybody always has said them; and whatever be the recommendation to these current opinions, or rather assertions, for opinion has little to do with them, it is certainly not their truth. There is not one in ten of the persons who talk on these universal topics, that has ever considered whether what it is customary to say be true or not; and though they are matters of everyday experience, they seldom pause to compare their habits of talking with their actual observation on the subject. But observation, unfortunately, we most of us make none, till past the age at which it would most avail us. We take up our sentiments, and not seldom our very feelings, upon trust, and it is not till after many a hard rub and bitter pang, we come to perceive that, had we felt more justly, we need not have suffered. Perhaps this is an evil in some degree irremediable; there are many who cannot, and more who will not, think and judge on their own behalf—what they were taught in their youth they will believe in their age, and what they said at fifteen they will go on saying

at fifty; though the whole course and current of their observations, had they made any, would go to disprove it. But if this is the case, and if it must be so, it is but of the more importance what habits of thinking and feeling young people receive, on entering a world that will not change its course to meet their expectations, or shew overmuch indulgence to their mistakes. If the mischief ended where we began to trace it, with the mistaken sentiments given forth in the talk of society, it would be small, and we would let it pass as a harmless fiction—but not seldom it goes to the dearest and tenderest interests of our bosoms, to the very vitals of our earthly happiness. It may indeed do worse—for it may assail our virtues and attaint our souls with sin, by giving a check to the benevolent affections, and inducing a morose and cynical habit of feeling towards our fellow-creatures, the very reverse of what Christianity enjoins.

These reflections, something long, as those may have thought who are in a hurry to know what they mean, were excited in my mind by a conversation I recently heard in a party of young ladies, and which I take as a pattern and semblance of twenty other conversations I have heard in twenty similar parties. Friendship was, as it very often is, the subject of discussion, and though the words have escaped my memory, I can well recall the substance of the remarks. One lady boldly asserted that there was no such thing as friendship in the world, where all was insincerity and selfishness. I looked, but saw not in her mirthful eye and unfurrowed cheeks any traces of the sorrow and ill-usage, that, I thought, should alone have wrung from gentle lips so harsh a sentence, and I wondered where, in twenty brief years, she could have learned so hard a lesson. Have known it, she could not; therefore I concluded she had taken it upon trust from the poets, who are fain to tell all the ill they can of human nature, because it makes better poetry than the good. The remark was taken up, as might be expected, by a young champion, who thought, or said without thinking, that friendship was—I really cannot undertake to say what—but all the things that young

ladies usually put into their themes at school—something very interminable, illimitable, and immutable. From this the discussion grew, and how it was, and what it was, went on to be discussed—I cannot pursue the thread of the discourse, but the amount of it was this. One thought friendship was the summer portion only of the blest ; a flower for the brow of the prosperous, that the child of misfortune must never gather. Another thought, that all interest being destructive of its very essence, it could not be trusted unless there was an utter destitution of everything that might recommend us to favour or requite affection. This lady must have been brought to the depth of wretchedness ere she ever could be sure she had a friend. Some, I found, thought it was made up of a great deal of sensibility, vulgarly called jealousy, that was to take umbrage at every seeming slight, to the indescribable torment of either party. Some betrayed, if they did not exactly say it, that they thought friendship such an absolute unity, that it would be a less crime to worship two gods than to love two friends ; and therefore, to bring it to its perfection, it was necessary that all beside should be despised and disregarded. Others, very young, and of course soon to grow wiser, thought it consisted in the exact disclosure of your own concerns, and those of everybody else, with which you might chance to become acquainted ; others, that it required such exact conformity in opinion, thought, and feeling, as should make it impossible to differ ; and others, that it implied such generous interference even with the feelings as well as affairs of its object, that it should spend itself in disinterested reproaches and unasked advice. But however differing else, all were sure that friendship but usurped the name, unless it were purely disinterested, endlessly durable, and beyond the reach of time and circumstance to change it ; and all were going forth in the full certainty of finding friends, each one after the pattern of her own imagination ; the first speaker only excepted, who was fully determined never to find any, or never to trust them if she did.

I marked with pained attention the warm glow of ex-

pectation so soon to be blighted, and reflected deeply on the many heartaches with which they must unlearn their errors. I saw that each one was likely to pass over and reject the richest blessing of earth, even in the very pursuing of it, from having sketched in imagination an unresembling portrait of the object of pursuit. "When friendship meets them," I said, "they will not know her. Can no one draw for them a better likeness?"

It is the language of books and the language of society, that friends are inconstant, and friendship but little to be depended on ; and the belief, where it is really received, goes far to make a truth of that which else were false, by creating what it suspects. Few of us but have lived already long enough to know the bitterness of being disappointed in our affections, and deceived in our calculations, by those with whom, in the various relationships of life, we are brought in contact. Perhaps the aggregate of pain from this cause is greater than from any other cause whatever. And yet it is much to be doubted whether nearly the whole of this suffering does not arise from our own unreasonable and mistaken expectations. There are none so unfortunate but they meet with some kindness in the world—and none, I believe, so fortunate but that they meet with much less than they might do, were it not their own fault.

In the first place, we are mistaken in our expectation that friendship should be disinterested. It neither is nor can be—it may be so in action, but never in the sentiment—there is always an equivalent to be returned. If not, it may be generosity, it may be benevolence, but friendship is not the name for it. As soon as we intermingle with our fellow-creatures, we begin to form preferences to one above another. The circumstances that decide this preference are infinitely various ; but be they what they may, the movement in the first instance is purely selfish. In the advances we make, the attentions we pay, and the attempts to recommend ourselves to their affections, it is our happiness, not theirs, of which the increase is in our view. In some way or other they pleased us before we began to love them ;

our friendship therefore is a purchase, not a gift ; a part of the price is paid, and the rest is in expectation. If we examine the movements of our own hearts, we must be sure that this is the case ; and yet we are so unreasonable as to expect our friends should be purely disinterested, and, after having secured their affections, we neglect to pay the price, and expect they should be continued to us for nothing. We grow careless of pleasing them, inconsiderate of their feelings, and heedless of the government of our own tempers towards them—and then we complain of inconsistency if they like us not so well as when dressed out in our best for the reception of their favour. Yet it is in fact we that are changed, not they.

Another fruitful source of disappointment in our attachments is, that while we are much more quick in detecting the faults of others than our own, we absurdly require that every one should be faultless but ourselves. We do not say that we expect this in our friends ; but we do expect it, and our conduct proves that we expect it. We begin also with believing it. The obscurity of distance, the veil that the proprieties of society cast over nature's deformity, the dazzling glitter of exterior qualities, baffle for a time our most penetrating glances, and the imperfect vision seems all that we would have it. Our inexperienced hearts, and some, indeed, that should be better taught, fondly believe it to be all it seems, and begin their attachment in full hope to find it so. What wonder, then, that the bitterest disappointment should ensue, when, on more close acquaintance, we find them full of imperfections, perhaps of most glaring faults, and we begin to express disgust, sometimes even resentment that they are not what we took them for. But was this their fault or ours ? Did they not present themselves to us in a garb of mortal flesh ; and do we not know that mortals are imperfect, soiled with sin—nay, sunk so very, very low in it, that however the outside be fair, the interior is corrupt and altogether vile ? He who knows all, alone knows how corrupt :—the heart itself, enlightened by His grace, is more deeply in the secret than any without can

be—but if the thing we love be mortal, something of it we must perceive—and more and more of it we must perceive as we look closer—and if this is to disappoint and revolt us, and draw harsh reproaches and bitter recriminations from our lips, there is but One on whom we can fix our hearts with safety—and He is one, alas ! we shew so little disposition to love, as proves that, with all our complainings and bewailings of each other's faultiness, our friends are as good as will at present suit us.

Another cause of mortification is, that we expect too much from those who do truly and really love us. We expect that they should prefer our interests, feelings, and purposes to their own. This is not, and cannot be. Truth has recorded many instances, and fiction has invented an abundance more, in which, on some great emergency, this has been the case ; and in the common relationships of life, we may every day see the most lovely and endearing instances of self-negation in favour of those in whom our hearts are fixed. But these are sacrifices, they are efforts against the current ; they ought never to be presumed upon, and never exacted, if it be possible to avoid it. But instead of this forbearance, the most willing hand becomes the most hardly taxed—the more kindness we receive, the more we demand—the friend who professes to love us must yield everything for us, bear everything from us, and do everything for us ; and if it come out at length that he have interests and purposes and feelings of his own, we are wounded and surprised, and exclaim against the fallibility of human affections. Yes, they are fallible, and they are limited as all things finite are ; and if we did not persist in disbelieving this truth, we need not suffer those bitter disappointments. There never was but One whose love confessed no limit, and he was more than man. The more he was provoked, the more he loved ; his kindness grew upon the injuries that repulsed it, and the greater the burdens heaped upon him, the lower bowed his sacred head to bear them. His favour neither grew on our deservings, nor is chilled by our demerits ; he gives all and takes nothing in

return ; and the more we demand, the more we confide, so much the more willing is he to bestow on us. But this is the portrait of no earthly friend, and unless it bear some resemblance to ourselves, we have no right to expect it should be.

And then the mutability of all sublunary things—is it in the power of human constancy to fix them? However determined to keep them, can the pleasures of to-day be the pleasures of to-morrow, drunk on with unsated appetite? Does the waste of years, and the growth of knowledge, and the change of habits, make no change in our feelings and tastes? We part from our friend in the full glow of reciprocal affection, and think to meet again exactly as we parted. Our attachment may indeed outlive the separation, and from youth to age be substantially the same. But meantime the character of each is slowly changing, new habits are acquiring, and new judgments forming. We meet again, and are surprised to find no more the unity of spirit that once united us, the assimilation of feeling that once made our society so delightful to each other. And again, in bitter disappointment, we inveigh against the falseness and versatility of those who once took so much delight in us. But are they to blame? Is it not the common course of all things earthly, on which changed and changeable is irrevocably written ?

And lastly, but not least productive of these painful issues, there is the false system under which we form our friendships, as we do all things else that concern us upon earth—a system of error as it regards ourselves, our situation, and our destiny. We forget that we are strangers and pilgrims upon earth, hurried forward to a distant and far other state. Our friends may be our fond companions by the way, they may assuage our sorrows, and heighten our delights, and with a transient tenderness may hold our hands and assist us in our task ; but their bosoms must no more be our resting-place than any other thing on earth—they are treasures that must be parted from, they are possessions that time must steal, they are goods that must corrupt and pass away. Heaven has pronounced it so, and so it must be.

And if in this, as in all other things, we persist in acting, feeling, and expecting, as if the world were our home, and the things of it our lasting heritage, instead of being, as they might, our sweetest consolation, our purest enjoyment, and highest zest of life, our friendships must become a source of mortification, chagrin, and discontent.

But are we, therefore, to say there is no such thing as friendship, or that it is not worth the seeking; morosely repel it, or suspiciously distrust it? If we do, we shall pay our folly's price in the forfeiture of that without which, however we may pretend, we never are or can be happy, preferring to go without the very greatest of all earthly good, because it is not what perhaps it may be in heaven. Rather than this, it would be wise so to moderate our expectation and adapt our conduct as to gain of it a larger measure; or, as far as may be possible, to gather of its flowers without exposing ourselves to be wounded by the thorns it bears. This is only to be done by setting out in life with juster feelings and fairer expectations.

It is not true that friends are few and kindness rare. No one ever needed a friend and deserved one, and found them not: but we do not know them when we see them, or deal with them justly when we have them. We must allow others to be as variable, and imperfect, and faulty as ourselves. An old writer has most forcibly said—"To say nothing of our friends, will not the sinking of our own hearts below the generous tenor of friendship blast the fruits of it to us? Did we use so little affection in making a friend that we need none to keep him? Must not we be always upon the stretch in some minute cautions and industries, in order to content that tender affection we would have in our friend? Can we make our love to him visible amidst the reserve and abstraction of a pensive mind? In our sanguine hours, do we not assume too much, and in our melancholy think ourselves despised?" Whether we feel it or not, this is the truth of ourselves, and if of ourselves, of others also. We do not wish our young readers to love their friends less, but to love them as what they are, rather than as what they wish

them to be ; and instead of the jealous pertinacity that is wounded by every appearance of change, and disgusted by every detection of a fault, and ready to distrust and cast away the kindest friend on every trifling difference of behaviour or feeling, to cultivate a moderation in their demands, a patient allowance for the effect of time and circumstance, an indulgence towards peculiarities of temper and character, and, above all, such a close examination of what passes in their own hearts, as will teach them better to understand and excuse what they detect in the hearts of others ; ever remembering that all things on earth are earthly, and therefore changeful, perishable, and uncertain.



A fable.

Besides the several pieces of morality to be drawn out of this vision, I learned from it, never to repine at my own misfortunes, or to envy the happiness of another; since it is impossible for any man to form a right judgment of his neighbour's sufferings.—ADDISON.



DO not know whether my readers ever felt a desire of the sort, but I have often thought it must be pleasant to listen in the days of *Æsop*, when every thrush could offer counsel in a voice as sweet as that with which she bids farewell to the departing sun, and every butterfly could whisper a warning to the frivolous and vain, before the cold wind numbed her golden bosom. However remotely wandering from the walks of men, however much condemned to solitude and silence, he

could hear something that was worth the listening; and worth the telling, too, as the world has seemed to think; since, for ages after, it is content to read what the fabler has ceased to tell, and the birds and the beasts have so unkindly ceased to utter.

Perhaps my readers do not believe that it ever has been so. That is a scepticism very unfavourable to the reception of my story; but if it be so, I can only say, that all I repeat I did surely hear, and if they listen they may hear it too—and perhaps they will think with me, that since it cannot be the discourse of creatures rational, I do wisely to attribute

it to those we term irrational. Perhaps, could these irrationals be heard in their own behalf, they would say our fables do them much injustice. They have shared our miseries, but not our sins. The wolf devours the lamb because he is hungry, and the lamb is the food that nature has appointed him ; when he no more is hungry, he will no more slay the lamb. He obeys the hard necessity brought on him by man's delinquency, and thinks and knows no wrong. But the jealousy, and the pride, and the hard unkindness, and the restless discontent, and aimless mischief, is all reserved for bosoms rational—we have put into the mouths of the viper and the lion, words of wrong that amid all created things, perhaps, were never heard but from our own. However this may be, I must proceed with my tale ; and if my readers, after a careful perusal, should be of opinion that I was deceived, and that the creatures I saw and heard were neither birds nor beasts, I willingly submit to their decision.

One day—if it was not in the days of *Æsop*, it must have been in some region not very commonly known—I was wandering by myself in the fairest of scenes, on the finest of days, and in the best of humours—how could I be otherwise ? It was a day and a scene in which the spirit that delights in nature's charms feels almost a painful struggle to enlarge its powers that it may enjoy them more. It was not hot, for the fresh breeze blew from the sea, bearing with it the perfume of the moss and herbage over which it passed ; it was not cold, for a bright autumn sun wanted yet some hours of setting ; and if now and then a silver fleece passed over it as a veil, it was but to change the tints and vary a prospect nothing could improve. Either my mind was that day free from cares, or in the overwhelming sense of gratitude for the bounty that with so much beauty clothes this perishable world, the remembrance of them was for the time absorbed ; could I be dissatisfied where all besides was harmony and peace ? Everything was beautiful, and everything, as I thought, seemed happy. A crowd of living creatures gave animation to the scene, and each one

appeared, in my delighted vision, exactly formed to be what it was, and to do what it was doing ; and could any one be other than itself, I thought it must lose something of its fitness and its charms. Yonder cold worm, I said, that crawls in naked ugliness upon the soil, and cannot rise from it, should I take it up and lay it upon that rose, would thank me little for my pains—it would pine on its beauty, and starve upon its perfumes—and what would avail it, in its earthly prison, the beetle's golden wing, or the velvet bosom of the fluttering moth ? From nature's largest work, to the least insect that frets the leaf, each thing has organs, and feelings, and habits, exactly suited to the place it is to fill—were it other than it is, it could not fill its place—and being what it is, were it removed to any other, it would surely be less happy. The flower of the valley would die upon the mountain's top ; and as surely would the hardy mountaineer, now flourishing on Alpine heights, languish and die if transplanted to the valley. The Maker of the world, then, has made no mistakes, has done no injustice—everything, as he has arranged it, is what it should be, and is placed where it should be, and none can repine, and none complain.

I thought so, but I was mistaken—things are very different when you come to look into them from what they appear on superficial observation. Viewed from a distance, the troubled ocean seems an unbroken surface ; go closer, it becomes a scene of tumult and destruction. And I, alas ! was not destined to carry home the delusion I had brought out, or had falsely gathered in the contemplation of nature's works, and the Creator's wisdom and munificence. Instead of all being fitness, beauty, and harmony serene, I had to learn that all was absolutely wrong, and nothing could be altered without being amended. First, from the tall summit of a rocking fir-tree, I heard the solitary Raven thus bewail himself :—" It is surely hard that I am doomed to dwell for ever on the top of this tall tree, battered by every storm that blows, and chilled by every bitter blast. For many an age, my ancestors, they say, dwelt here before me—but why must one be born to a destiny not of one's own choosing ? You

tiny linnet's nest, could I get into it, would suit my taste exactly, and I might spend my days in quietness and peace."

"This element," said a Trout to his fellow, as they glided down the stream, "is neither healthy nor agreeable. The sun-beam plays upon the surface but to mock us, and never comes beneath to warm our blood. There is no reason, that ever I have heard, why fishes have not as much right to fly in the air as either birds or butterflies."—"True," replied his fellow, "and we would try it in despite of fortune, but that our lungs are so badly formed, I am not sure we could breathe when we came there."

"I am a contented creature," croaked out a Frog that sat crouching by the streamlet's side—"I like my condition well enough, nor ever wish to live but in this mud—yet I confess I see no reason why that gay pheasant should wear such brilliant feathers, while I have none. The gifts of Providence are very partially distributed, methinks."

A bulky Cabbage (for in those days vegetables as well as animals could speak) from an unweeded bed, where, without much care, it had grown full, large, and round, was just then looking through the window of a greenhouse, and with no small bitterness of tone exclaimed, "How blinded, how misjudging are mankind! While I, a most wholesome and useful vegetable, am left here to grow as I may, through summer heat and winter cold, these tawdry japonicas, fit for nothing but to look at, are to be nursed, and stoved, and watered. It is hard indeed to bear the world's injustice!"—"And I," rejoined an Ox, comfortably grazing in a field, who had, doubtless, overheard the last remark, "had I the management of this world's good, would have a very different arrangement, and if any did not labour, neither should they have food. I, who have toiled all day, am fed on grass, and sent forth to gather it for myself, while yonder idle spaniel is reared on dainties from his master's hand—but ere he be allowed to eat, he ought to be yoked as we are, and sent forth to plough."—"It is true," replied a Team-horse, his companion; "I see no reason why we, of animals the largest and the best, should be obliged to do the work

for all. Why should not those idle blackbirds come down and prepare the ground for casting in the seed, while we go sit upon the tree and sing, till it suits our appetite to come and pick up what others sow ? ”

“ Alas ! alas ! ” whistled a pretty, painted Goldfinch, with whom berries that day were rather scarce ; “ to what a hard destiny am I condemned ! Were I yon ugly barn-door fowl, I should be fed and sheltered for the sake of my eggs and chickens—but in this sordid, selfish age, beautiful as I am, no one cares for me, because I can give them nothing in return.”

And next there came buzzing by me a fine gilded Fly, fluttering and feasting itself upon every smaller insect it could catch, till I began to wonder where its appetite would be stayed—when, finely spun between the branches of a rose, a strong spider’s web caught the gay reveller, and held him fast in chains. “ So ! ” exclaimed the prisoner, “ thus it is to live in a world of treachery and crime ; placed by Providence at the mercy of every bloated spider ; the innocent still the victim of the base ! ”

And so I went on and on, and listened and listened, and nothing could I hear throughout all the creation I thought so beautiful, but plaints of dissatisfaction, and charges of injustice ; all were dissatisfied with what they were, and injured because they were not something else. My heart sunk within me at the hearing—I listened no more, but I had gained ample food for meditation.

Can it be, then, I said within myself, that he, the Beginner and the End of all things, Creator, Lord, Disposer of the world, has done injustice to every creature he has placed in it ? There are those, it is true, who have made it what he made it not, and have introduced for themselves sins and miseries, which he at first ordained not—but it is not of these we hear so much complaining—the cry perpetual is against the providential circumstances of nature or of fortune to which each is subjected. However infidelity deny, or carelessness forget it, these circumstances do, and ever will remain in the hand of him who is Lord of all :

therefore, every complaint that is uttered against our fortunes, is a complaint against him, for he assigned it.

From the cold dust which was all alike before his spirit breathed on it, he moulded a world of creatures, so various as none but Deity could devise ; but endlessly variable as they were, each one was in its formation minutely perfect ; not one had a want that it had not the means of supplying ; not one had a faculty without some purpose for which it was imparted. The more deeply we examine into the secrets of the natural world, the more certainly and surprisingly we find it so. Examine the minutest flower, and see with what wonderful forethought, as it were, it is supplied with organs, active, though to all appearance motionless, to feed itself, to grow, and to produce its fruit : not all alike, but each one differently. Had they been all alike, all must have grown on the same soil, in the same aspect—now, from the hardy lichen that braves the rigour of the poles, to the tender offspring of a tropical sun, there are some that can thrive in all. There is no doubt that of two plants of certain descriptions placed near each other, each one from its different formation will imbibe the different juices suited to itself ; on which its companion would have died, perhaps. It is certainly not without a reason, whether that reason can be traced or not, that one leaf is clothed with silken hairs, while another has a coat of glossy smoothness. Why has the vine the long, winding tendril that never grows upon the oak ? Why are the seeds of the mistletoe denied the power of rooting in the earth, and yet have a quality no other seed possesses, of adhering to the bark of trees on which they take root and live ? Why, but because it is the place that God assigns them. More discernible still is the fitness of everything in the animal creation. Why has the beetle rough, harsh scales upon its wings, when it could fly like the butterfly without them ? Plainly because it was meant to dwell in holes and crevices, where without them its wings would be broken and destroyed. Why is the bill of the sparrow drawn to a sharp, straight point, while that of the hawk is curved and hooked ? Because

the sparrow is to pick out the minute seed from its hiding-place in the flower, and the hawk is to rend the flesh of the animals it feeds upon. We know all this, and we admire it, and admit the wisdom and beauty of the arrangement—it would seem to us a thing most strange, perverse, and ludicrous, that the frog, abiding in the muddy pool, should sigh to be invested with the pheasant's tail—that the finned trout should propose to be flying through the air, and the cabbage to be nursed and stifled in the green-house. But alas ! bears it no resemblance to the things we hear and see elsewhere, to something that we feel and in our folly utter ?

The same Being who created the animal and the vegetable race, determined for us our powers, our characters, and circumstances. So exactly right in those, can it be here only he is wrong ? Can he have placed one of us in a situation in which we ought not to be, denied us any natural advantages it would be desirable we should possess, or given us powers and faculties unsuited to the part he means us to perform ? It is impossible. Our pride suggests it ; our folly gives it utterance almost as often as we speak of ourselves or our affairs ; scarcely any one among us thinks he is by nature and fortune where and what he should be. Yet not more absurd are the complaints and wishes we have imagined in the wiser brute, than those we hear from the lips of beings capable of knowing and reflecting on their absurdity—professing, too, to be aware from whom all things are, and by whose will all things are determined.

It is most true, indeed, that by man's defection confusion has been introduced into the Creator's perfect work, and that in one sense we are not and cannot be what we ought to be, and what we should desire to be. But while to this moral perversion we are sufficiently insensible, our murmurs and complainings are ever breathed against the natural and providential portion assigned us upon earth. To hear the language of society, one might suppose that every individual in it had been wronged, by not being or having something that he is not or has not. How unfitted he is for the station

he is in, how unfortunate it is that he happens to be so placed, how happy and how useful he might have been under other circumstances, how hard is his portion, how unequal the distribution of things, how blind is fortune, how unjust is fate, how inequitable is the world in his behalf—what is all this but the language of creatures who think they could arrange the affairs of the world better than he who does it, and understand the nature and propensities of men better than he who made them?

But far from understanding what is best for each other, we may be assured we do not understand it even for ourselves. We come into the world very differently moulded and endowed, our minds as little resembling each other as our persons: and equally various are the portions to which we are born. The circumstances of after life, as much the arrangement of our Maker as our first introduction to it, make even more difference perhaps than our original constitution. The result is, that each one has character, talents, powers, habits, feelings, necessities, and capabilities, as peculiarly his own and distinct from others as his station in life, which, as we know, can be occupied but by one. Now, whatever these be, we may rest assured we have no right whatever to complain: no injustice has been done us, and no unfitness is imposed on us: where Providence has placed us is where we ought to be; and except in so far as by our sin we may unfit ourselves, of which we have little right to complain, we are what for our situation it is best we should be. As much right has the worm to complain that he has not the beetle's wings, or the raven that he is not as small as the linnet, as we to complain that we have not the talents, the beauty, or the fortune of another. As reasonable is it for the ox to desire to sit upon the tree and sing, while the blackbird tills the soil, as for men to envy and malign each other for being differently placed and differently accommodated. We cannot read, indeed, the fitness and propriety of things in the affairs of men as we can in the natural world—because we know not our own hearts, the cause and

consequence, and eternal issues of God's dealings with us—but are we not bound to believe it? And if to believe it, to act, and speak, and feel as if we did so? Are we at liberty to suppose that we alone of all created things are misformed, mismanaged, and misplaced?



Emulation.

Il faut rejeter non seulement ce faux éclat de l'esprit, mais encore la prudence humaine, qui paroît la plus sérieuse et la plus utile, pour entrer comme les petits enfants dans la simplicité de la foi, dans la candeur et dans l'innocence des mœurs, dans l'horreur de péché.—
FENELON.



S in the hazy darkness of the scarcely-breaking twilight, every object is distinct and uncertain, and the more the eye searches the more it is bewildered, and the foot moves uncertainly, unable to discern between the firm greensward and the darkening chasm—so obscured, so uncertain were the moral perceptions of mankind, ere the day-star of the Christian truth rose upon our world. They

who talked most of virtue, and professed to love it most, and would perhaps have loved it had they known what it was, mistook the nature of the good they sought, and took evil in its stead. When the great man of antiquity prepared the tissue of moral beauty with which to dress himself for popular applause, pride and selfishness were the thread with which he wove it, the flowers he wrought in it were the evanescent charms of time and sense. Examining the finest specimens of Greek and Roman virtue, what do we find

them? The hero was one to whom the world was a play-thing, and men's lives a toy. His hard bosom was forbidden every kindly emotion; every tender sympathy was imperiously sacrificed to a stern will determined on self-aggrandisement. He was a traitor, a tyrant, and a robber; yet he lived admired and beloved; and died, as he believed, the favourite of the gods—still looking to the laurel wreath as his eternal crown, and the tortures of his enemies as the amusement of his Elysium. The sage, the philosopher, though a more harmless, was a more self-deluded being still. He sought the applause of the world in affecting to despise it, and did but call off his senses, passions, and feelings from the things around him, to fix them solely and entirely on himself. He mistook for greatness the contempt with which he rejected all the good that God or man could offer, and for magnanimity the defiance with which he braved Heaven itself to subdue him. And these were the high standards of heathen virtue, by others admired at a distance, and at a distance imitated. A self-sufficing pride, an impatient susceptibility that would not suffer the slightest touch of wrong, a bitterness of revenge that never pardoned it—these were among the foremost of a heathen's virtues. In considering the institutions of Lycurgus and other ancient legislators for the education of youth, harsh and unnatural as they appear to us, we are struck with their fitness to effect the purpose designed in them, of rearing their children to what had been accepted as the standard of moral excellence. Having determined that there was more disgrace in the discovery of a theft than in the theft itself, the Spartans pursued a consistent purpose in teaching their children to steal adroitly; and thus throughout, we find the institutions of the wisest of heathen nations admirably fitted to make their children what they considered that they ought to be—virtuous according to their dark perceptions—heroes and wise men, such as we have described.

Perhaps my readers are thinking, and my critics making ready to assert, that I am talking instead of listening; and lamenting what has been, rather than observing what is.

But they are mistaken. Little connected as may seem the subjects, I never should have thought of Cato, or Lycurgus, or Caesar, or Diogenes, if I had not listened one whole day in mute attention to the progress of education in a certain school-room, and following thence into the world its tutored inmates, traced in idea the results of all the lessons I had seen them learning. When they were taught music, it was expected they should play—when they were taught French, it was expected they should understand it—and except in some few unhappy instances, I suppose the results corresponded with the expectations. But some things I observed were taught them that it was not expected they should learn, or desired they should practise—and if, in after life, they evinced an unexpected proficiency in those studies, few, perhaps, of their instructors would recognise the fruit of their own labours, the produce of the seed their industry had sown.

Parents who brought their daughters to this school—at least I heard it of so many, that I am inclined to suppose it of the rest—had said, either that they were so stupid they could not, or so clever they would not, pursue their studies well at home; and they thought that the emulation excited by rivalry with others would much tend to promote their progress. The governess who should venture to contradict this introductory clause would probably lose her school; added to which, it is an admitted rule, that what every one says must be true; by parity of reasoning, what one is always hearing one must believe; and conscientiously, and in pure good faith, this lady undertook what was asked of her, and performed what she undertook—the young ladies were powerfully stimulated by the very means prescribed, and made a very rapid progress in everything. Alas! yes, in much that was unperceived and unsuspected by those who meant not to teach them anything but good—unperceived by any one, perhaps, but myself, whose peculiar business there it was to look out for what was wrong; not maliciously, as I beg my readers to believe—but as the physician inquires for the symptoms of the disease he apprehends.

In the centre of a long and carpetless floor, around a coverless table—a cold and uncomfortable prospect, that I hope had not the same chilling influence on their faculties as it would have on mine—and in defiance of all consequent spine-complaints, placed upright upon a backless form, there sat a large circle of ladies, not many years apart in age, and considered, I suppose, from their being classed together, on something like a level of attainments. They were receiving, it appeared, a lesson of French from the master, and producing for his inspection the lessons conned or written in his absence. A pert-looking little creature, whose confidence bespoke a priority her size could not have claimed, handed up her exercise with all the air of certain and cheaply-earned success, chattered through her lessons as if they had grown upon her tongue ; and in a tone of carelessness withal, that seemed determined to shew it cost her no pains. Monsieur, too happy to escape the murderous garbling of his native tongue, to which he was perpetually condemned, reiterated his “Bon, bon,” “Brave, brave,” with many a whispered and broken sentence—“*Bien habile*”—“*très petite*”—“*bonne fille*”—the last being withal by no means proved. The little lady turned her black eyes round the circle with a look that said as plain as words, “Now, stupid girls, do the best you can, for you cannot help yourselves.” This young lady was too well bred to laugh or mock ; but as I watched her through the remaining lessons, a slight movement of the upper lip when any one made a blunder, a certain wriggle on her seat whenever their ignorance caused detention, betrayed sufficiently her impatience of their slowness, and triumph in her own superiority.

A pretty, pensive-looking girl, taller by half the head than her companions, in whose meek eye a sensitive timidity beamed almost distressingly, had the misfortune to be addressed with a preliminary exhortation to do as well as the demoiselle who had preceded her. The exordium was fatal—a lesson, very respectably done, and giving evident tokens of a great deal of pains, was begun and finished with

a blush, that, to put the best construction on it, confessed a painful sense of inferiority, and a feeling of shame, that having done the best, it was not better. Many others followed—among the rest a heavy-looking girl, whose air of cowed despondency particularly took my attention—the helpless blockhead of her class, whose right to be hindmost had never been disputed since she came into it. Her ill-formed lips could no more pronounce the words than her memory could retain them. Yet this poor girl was urged, and upbraided, and reminded how much she was bigger than those who were less, and how little less than those who were bigger, and how absolutely inferior to them all ; and the air of discouraging indifference with which the books were thrown back to her, was only equalled by the sullen acquiescence in disgrace with which they were received.

My attention was at this moment distracted by a voice behind me, raised something above concert pitch, in reproaches against a child whose ruddy, vacant face, and large blue eyes, beamed anything at that moment but a sister's feeling, for having allowed a younger sister to get so much before her ; while the sister's swarthy countenance and deep-sunk eye bespoke a power of intellect with which the little Hebe might have contended long enough. In this corner was a scene of excitation equal to anything the most anxious mother could desire for the stimulus of her daughter's talents. The ladies here were all upon their feet in a circle round their teacher, answering questions made to them in succession, and taking places, as it is called, according to the correctness of the replies. It was not on their own proficiency only the victory now depended—all honours must be won upon a rival's blunders ; and, like the riders on a balanced plank, the uprising of the one was proportioned to the downgoing of the other. Never were pugilists met with looks of more determined contention than these gentle wrestlers for literary honour. I could not mark without a pang the look of disappointment in a child who knew the answer, when she found the one above her knew it too ; and the eager delight with which another heard the blunder that gave scope for

the display of her own proficiency. Envy, malice, jealousy, contempt, every evil passion of which their little bosoms were susceptible, played in succession on their features: their teacher, meantime, as if she took them all for virtues, went on adding fuel to the flame, in praises, taunts, and comparisons, without any regard to the passions she was exciting, or the feelings she was perverting.

I heard much more, but I have told enough for my purpose. This is the stimulant which, under the gentle name of Emulation, is thought indispensable to the successful education of children. The term itself is found in Scripture classed with no fair company—but we mind not the term, which we are aware in the original admits of a good as well as a bad sense. Is the thing itself good? It is asserted that children will not learn without it—that competition is essential to their progress. We doubt it much: we see not why the praise absolute may not be as enticing as the praise comparative. But let this point be conceded, if it must, and be it admitted that a girl will learn more in the hope of outshining, or the fear of being outshone, than she can do, either from the desire of knowledge, or a wish to please her instructor, or any other motive. Still the question is not at rest.

The day-star of truth has risen upon our world, and opened to our view a standard of moral excellency such as heathens never dreamed of. Pride, the stronghold of a heathen's virtue, has been discovered to be a soul-destroying sin—the very sin that drove angels from heaven, and man from paradise. Strife, resentment, ambition, rivalry, contention, envy, self-preference, have been determined to be sins—the eternal blessing has been pronounced by lips divine, not on the successful contender for this world's praise, but on the meek in spirit and the pure in heart. Our children are Christians, devoted in baptism, and, as every pious parent hopes, hereafter to be accepted as the servants and followers of Him, who, when He comes to acknowledge them as such, will not ask what they know, but what they are. Do we act as consistently as heathens did, teaching them that all

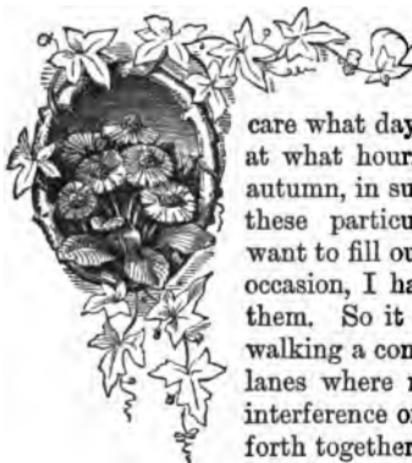
the attainments and all the knowledge in the world were a dear-bought purchase at the expense of one right feeling, of one solid Christian virtue? I fear not. Let any one of my young readers but watch the movements of her own heart, and judge of the fact; for she is competent to do so, however young. What is her motive for the extraordinary exertions she is making in some particular study to-day? The wish to gain approbation and esteem, a desire to make the utmost use of the talents given her, perhaps the simple wish to excel in that particular study for her own gratification—or is it the fear that some one will do better, that some one she desires to surpass will come up to her? Suppose the point gained, and herself held up as an example and a shame to those who have done worse, she is delighted; but why? Would she have been equally delighted if every one else had done as well? Or suppose she has failed—why is she depressed? With regret that she did not make more exertion, and a resolve to repair it to-morrow; or with despite that others succeeded better, envy of their superior talents, and dissatisfaction with her own? If the former be the case in any of these supposed probabilities, the stimulus of rivalry was clearly unnecessary, for her feelings were independent of all comparison—if the latter, she gained improvement perhaps, she gained an accomplishment perhaps, and she went to bed, satisfied that she had done well. But she had been proud, or jealous, or envious, or discontented. Pride, envy, jealousy, and discontent, are sins; by every indulgence of them God is offended; by every excitement of them an evil passion is fostered and strengthened.

The nature of this seed is but too well proved by the harvest it produces. In society, among women especially, a close observer might be astonished, if less inured to it, at the little idea of wrong attached to feelings of this description. There are few women, perhaps not one, who, if she knows herself, can say she was never pained by the praises of another, nor ever depreciated the merits of another to enhance her own. If we say this is natural, and cannot be prevented—yes, but it is hateful, it is sinful, it is dia-

bolical. The gospel has been sent to disclose to us our state of natural delusion, by the shedding on our bosoms of a purer light ; and it has ranked these feelings in the catalogue of moral crimes, most offensive to God and man, and deserving of eternal condemnation. We, in our great wisdom, keep the opinions of our heathen ancestors ; and, in our great madness, act upon them, teach them to our children, and say they cannot be educated without them. Then let them remain for ever ignorant. We strangely miscalculate, even for our happiness in this world, when we sacrifice character to acquirements of any kind. That is indeed to part from our decent and necessary clothing, for the purchase of some brilliant jewel with which to deck ourselves. I surely shall not be suspected of too lightly estimating the advantage of mental cultivation and polite accomplishments. By every proper motive, by every sinless incentive, we may provoke our pupils to exertion—to the gifted we may say, Make use by assiduity of what you have—to the less endowed, Make amends by assiduity for what you have not ; and by praise or blame enforce the precept. But, if we must choose between the moral and the intellectual good—if the culture that is to raise the flower must foster with it the poisonous weed, we hold the utmost acquisition of human intellect light indeed. Its future fruits will never allay the passions excited for its acquisition. When sin becomes the burden and the shame of a bosom struggling, and yet unable to repress it, learning and talent will not whisper peace. When the applause, and the triumph, and the approbation of men, are past and forgotten, the evil thought, the sinful emotion, will remain upon the conscience ; and, unless mercy blot it thence, on Heaven's eternal records.

Evil Speaking.

*'Tis slander,
Whose edge is sharper than the sword ; whose tongue
Outvenoms all the worms of Nile ; whose breath
Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie
All corners of the world.*



NE day—I suppose my readers do not exactly care what day, or what sort of a day, or at what hour, or whether in spring or autumn, in sunshine or in clouds—I tell these particulars sometimes, when I want to fill out my paper ; but, on this occasion, I have enough to say without them. So it was one day—I had been walking a considerable distance through lanes where nature unchecked by any interference on the part of man, brought forth together, in boundless luxuriance, her bitters and her sweets—the poisonous nightshade twined her branches round the honeyed woodbine—the bindweed laid its head of pure and spotless white on the hard bosom of a neighbouring thorn—the thistle and the harebell grew side by side. It was with difficulty, in some places, I had made my way through the midst of them ; and sometimes the brambles caught my dress, and sometimes I set my foot upon a thistle—and when I attempted to gather a flower, the thorns pricked and

the nettles stung me. But I do not remember that I felt any surprise, or any sort of resentment, that they did so. I neither wondered they should grow there, nor desired that they should be rooted out. I cannot recollect, indeed, that I had any thoughts upon the subject—it was so natural they should be there, and being there, that they should do what they did—all seemed too much of course to claim any observation.

Leaving these wild and lawless paths, I entered by a gateway into grounds, that, though scarcely extensive enough to claim the title of a park, were yet approaching to it in character, very beautiful, and of no inconsiderable extent. Though the house was not in sight, no one could doubt it was the paddock of some goodly mansion, on which the owner expended constant attention, and which it pleased him to adorn and beautify. The magnificent trees, feathered even to the ground, shewed the care with which they had been protected from the browsing of the cattle. The flowering shrubs told, by their sunny looks, that they or their forefathers had been bred in something less than fifty-two degrees of latitude. A slender leveret stole fleetly over the turf, scarcely bending under its steps; and a squirrel, that looked as if he had been just combed and dressed, was leaping among the trees—but the cur that should enter there was doomed to death, by notice written upon a board; and his owner, too, unless the spring-guns could distinguish between the honest man and the thief. And now my path was broad and straight, and beaten very hard: having no more to force my road through narrow ways and paths uncertain, I began to walk freely and carelessly; occupied with the altered beauty of the scene around me, I did not look where I was treading. Nature was not displaced by art, for she was here in all her splendour, in the full-dress garb with which taste, and industry, and wealth, had clothed her, yet decked in no other beauties than her own. My mind became occupied with admiring, that He, who had made a world so beautiful that nothing could be wanting to it, had yet left to its inhabitants the

means of improving it, and adding to its charms—for doubtless, even in Eden, it was the business of man to train and beautify what nature made: and now that it has become his harder task to humour the unwilling soil, and provide against a capricious climate, a mass of the most exquisite materials remain to him, and his toil and care are repaid by every combination of beauty taste can suggest and skill accomplish. While I was thinking all this—one may think a great many wise things in less time than one can say them—and not regarding where I walked, I set my foot upon some low thistles, negligently left upon the path, and while it tingled from their thorns, felt very much inclined to upbraid the thistles that grew where thistles should not, and the gardener that did not dig them up, and the master that did not keep a better gardener. But why did that excite surprise, and almost indignation here, which a short time before did not awaken so much as a reflection?

The world is a wide wilderness. Things good and excellent are strangely mixed in it with corruptions the vilest and the basest. The most enormous crimes crowd round and stifle the most generous feelings. Natural virtues, the broken outlines of that image once impressed upon the heart of man, now indistinct, and faint, and almost gone, are found in such base company—it is true of nations as of individuals—that on the most brilliant character are marked the foulest spots. We have but to read the history of men in their natural state, to learn that this has been so—we have but to study the lives and characters of persons under no other influence than that of natural feeling, to be assured it is so still. But in this wilderness there is a garden, which He who made it surely takes pleasure in. He has fenced it round, he has gathered out the stones from it, he has planted it with the choicest vines. Separated from an idolatrous, self-adoring world, drawn round, as it were, with the compass of his most holy Word, as far as the light of truth has in its spirit reached, the Redeemer has appropriated to himself a people under the appellation of Christians, to worship him, and love him, and, as far as in their weak humanity

they can, to follow in his footsteps. He has left this fair garden under no ordinary culture : He knows that the soil he made it from is ever what it was, disposed to bear the brier and the thorn that choke the goodly produce of his care. But what could have been done more for it that he has not done ? The mid-day of gospel truth shines on it : the most holy precepts and most sanctifying doctrines are shewn forth in it. Like the light dews of the morning that fall, we see not whence, the Holy Spirit sheds its influence on the heart—the sweetest hopes and richest promises are whispered abroad for our encouragement. The result is, in some respects, what we might expect it to be. It is true that sin springs up every hour in the corrupted bosom, but it is not left to flourish there unchecked ; a purer morality takes the place of nature's blindness, a stronger principle comes in aid of nature's weakness. Have we not reason, then, to be more startled, and more concerned, if, in walking through this cultured ground, we meet with wrongs that should not flourish there ? Is it there we must be cautious of the thistles and the briers that prick and entangle us at every step ; and walk as insecurely as among those who know no better guide than their own perverted will ?

It should not be ; but it is so, in one respect at least ; there is one evil to which Christianity puts no stop ; even real, vital, spiritual religion, as far as I have seen, puts no stop to it ; with some few, very few, individual exceptions.

So much I have said in introduction, the better to excuse the earnest offence I have taken against what is commonly treated as a jest. To say I listened is superfluous here ; for whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, it is impossible to escape the sound—slander, evil speaking,—what shall I call it, for it has many names ? From one end of society to the other, among the grave and the gay, the wise and the foolish, where shall you escape ? You might as well live on the ocean's edge, and say you will not list the breaking of the waters. We *must* hear it, and we have heard it so long, that I fear we have lost all idea of guilt attached to it. And most of all, I fear that our children

cannot escape the infection, but must grow up with the same habits of doing, insensibly and without reflection, what their mothers and grandmothers have done before them. It is for their sakes, if not directly addressed to them, I have chosen the subject—the thistle may be eradicated when it first springs up ; but let it root itself, let it get firm possession of the soil, and the task becomes difficult, if not impossible.

Evil speaking—I prefer that word to others, because it includes truth as well as falsehood—pervades every sort of society ; the only variation is in the different sort of things people amuse themselves with saying of each other. In a frivolous, fashionable, polite circle, I observe it has regard to things external—to the persons, fortunes, pedigree, and connexions of its subjects. Somebody's grandfather was something that he should not have been, or, at least, that he had rather not have been, if he could have helped it. Somebody has by no means so much fortune as they seem to have, and some are guilty of having lived more years than anybody supposes. Those who sing cannot sing, and those who dance cannot dance, and somebody's nose is the wrong shape, and somebody's hair is the wrong colour, and one lady's diamonds are paste, and another lady's plate is borrowed—one is ostentatious because she talks too wisely, another is weak because she talks too foolishly. I am sure, and so do these—but it all amounts to nothing ; and, saving the loss of time and words, I do not think there is much harm done ; for no one charges the other with any wrong, precisely because they do not care whether she commits it or not—their estimate of evil makes their evil speaking idle rather than injurious.

In a society a little more rational, as if the rank weed flourished better the better were the soil, it is the character, the conduct, the vital interests of life, that are invaded. Every fault exposed, every luckless word repeated, thoughts, motives, and feelings ascribed, where the plain act was all that could be known—this is bad enough ; for it loosens the bonds of kindness between man and man, it excites preju-

dices and suspicions, wounds the feelings, and affects the earthly interests—but this is not the worst. There is a sort of society we usually call religious or serious society—company, that is, from which the mention of God and our eternal interests is not excluded as unpolite discourse, nor shunned as a melancholy topic; where right and wrong are what God approves and disapproves; where, when earth is spoken of, heaven is not forgotten, and when wrong is mentioned, sin before God is meant. Is it possible the weed can flourish here? Alas, it is here it has its most bitter, its most cruel growth—for the subjects of slander here are life and death—eternal life and death eternal. The sinner whom God spares and waits for, a fellow-sinner scoffs at and despises—the stain that Jesus washes with his tears, a fellow-sinner eagerly exposes—the penitent bosom that Heaven has comforted, has every wound made to bleed afresh by the taunts and the whispers of his fellows. They whom, for their Saviour's sake, the Father has declared he will not judge, on earth are more hardly judged than any, by those who stand alike condemned and alike obtaining mercy. The errors and inconsistencies the Almighty bears with, men pronounce at once to be decisive. The axe which mercy has suspended yet another and another year, and Jesus in heaven, perhaps, is even now entreating should be withheld another year to these, man would lay instantly to the root of the unfruitful tree. Do we say that no real Christian does so? Real Christians—God forbid that I should think them otherwise!—say it—and if their words be so adverse to their meaning, as I hope they are, is it not time they were better suited?

We are not here speaking of what those who say it know to be false—that is a crime that bears another name, and though under one false colouring and another, it veils its blackness oftener than it should, no one under its right name will venture to defend it. We have spoken of this elsewhere. Our subject is of that manner of evil speaking in which we believe what we say to be true. People are apt to think there is no harm in saying what we know to be true; but let them be aware that the things we know are very, very few—

what we think, believe, conjecture, or hear, we can by no means be said to know. I may know that a person did such an act, or said such a word—in saying that he did so, therefore, I cannot risk a falsehood; but if I did add one thing more, if I ascribe a motive, a cause, an intention, a feeling, to that word or deed, I cannot know that what I say is truth, for these are things that can be certainly known but to God himself. And if I speak against another in their character and disposition—I may have very good grounds for my decision, and the best I can have; but it does not amount to knowledge. For instance, I hear a person say one thing to-day and the contrary to-morrow, and I presume myself justified in saying she is false and insincere. By no means—it may arise from an instability of character, a rapid transition of feeling, or uncertainty of judgment, which, though a great weakness, is not the vice with which I charged her. We know that the same disease will not shew itself by the same symptoms in different constitutions, neither do resembling symptoms always imply a similar disease. So the act that with us would be the result of one feeling, in another mind may be the result of a very different one. And, alas! we do not even know our own hearts; we are deceived in every movement, in every motive and affection of our bosoms. How then can we persuade ourselves we know what is passing in another?

But suppose our evil speaking be truth,—certain, indisputable truth. Are we justified? Say, first, whether you have never done the thing you desire to conceal—never said the thing you would blush to hear repeated—never thought the thought you would not for worlds that any one should read. If never, then go and tell the worst you know, say the worst you think, of all around you. There is One in heaven who knows: He hath said, With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again; but never mind, zealous propagator of the truth—go on to tear away the veil with which your neighbour tries to hide his faults—the time is not quite come, when, if some one veils not yours, the rocks and mountains will not serve you for a covering, and

truth will be sufficient to prove you deserving of everlasting misery.

Yet this is not all. God is taking account of something mortals overlook. What was your motive for that injurious truth you told this morning? For that remark you made to another's prejudice, too true to be disputed? You will say you had no bad motive: but did you consider before you spoke, whether you had or not? It will not do to run a risk in this: while you are keeping the register of others' faults with so much justice, there is One more just than you, who registers your thoughts and every secret motive of your heart. Jealousy is sin—envy is sin—strife is sin—unkindness, retaliation, anger, hatred, variance, all are sins—nay, evil speaking itself is declared in Holy Writ to be so. Will you risk the accumulation of sin upon your soul, and swell the dark catalogue that is against you, for the mere sake of setting the characters of men in their proper light, and undeviating everybody as to their neighbours' actions?

That those who make light of sin in themselves and sport of it in others, should do this, we need not so much wonder: but to return again to those who call themselves religious, distinctively from a careless and unbelieving world? You know, or pretend to know, the extent of your nature's corruption—you bewail before Heaven your inability to conquer it—you declare there is absolutely no good in you, and that the remembrance of your sins is an intolerable burden. How then can you venture to appoint yourselves the judges of your fellow-creatures, and take delight in exposing and talking of their faults? Do you not know the difficulty of conquering one native and deep-rooted sin? Do you not know the tears a Christian sheds in secret for the sins he cannot conquer? Do you not know that the path of life is dangerous, and full of temptations we have not in ourselves the power to resist? And yet you go on criticising, censuring, exposing one another; whispering from house to house of this person's inconsistencies, and that person's neglects, and one should not do this, and another should not say that. Oh! it is little, little indeed, with all your profession, you

know of your own heart, or it would surely find you other work ! If you think any one is more undeserving in the sight of God than you are, you have a step downward yet to make, ere you reach the place of safety at your Saviour's feet : and when you come there, whatever God, who reads all hearts, may think, you, who read only your own, will believe that it is worse than any other. And oh ! if you did really know, so well as you profess to do, the agony of conscious sin to one who hates it, you would not by your hard speeches add one feather's weight to the intolerable burden. Would you have mocked at Peter when he denied his Lord ? When Paul besought relief for the weakness that exposed him to Satan's influence, and was denied, would you have reproached him with it ? Yes, you would—but remember that your Saviour did not.

If such is the evil, where is the remedy ? What the best principle cannot exterminate, may seem to admit of none. Take up the thistle before it has taken root too deeply. Where there is not a malicious love of mischief in the heart, which I trust is very seldom, we speak evil because we always have done so, and because we have always heard it done. Let the young be watchful against the habit, and resist the example. To assist them in this, the first thing is to induce a habit of thinking as well of others as they can ; for those who think no evil will say none. You hear something you are disposed to blame—but you may have misconstrued the words ; the speaker may have used stronger expressions than he was aware of ; he may have regretted them as soon as spoken. Accustom yourself to such reflections as these. You see, or are told of, an action you disapprove—perhaps there was some reason for it no one knows ; some temptation that at least extenuates it ; some mistake that led to it. Try to believe so. You are shocked by defects and vices of character in others—say to yourself, ere you condemn, Some neglect of education, some bad example, some physical disorder, or mental imbecility, may have caused all this—you will be in no hurry to speak the worst while you are thus endeavouring to think the best ; and it will, besides, keep

you in better humour with your fellow-creatures, and consequently more amiable in your deportment towards them. The next thing is to accustom yourself to watch your own actions, and the secret movements of your own heart, and to lay by the account of them. Then, when you are disposed to censure, there will come the thought, I once felt that evil passion too ; I remember when I committed that same fault ; I have not that wrong propensity, but then I have this other, which is as bad. This habit will make you humble ; and whatever makes you humble, will make you lenient. Another preventive is, to store your mind with other matters, and provide yourself with better things to talk about ; for it is the want of mental occupation that makes us so busy with other men's matters, and the want of something to say that makes us speak so much evil of each other. This is the reason women are more disposed to it than men ; and would be a reason, if there were no other, for the solid and extensive cultivation of their minds beyond what their immediate duties may seem to require ; and it is a reason why religious young women must not neglect their talents and give up their literary pursuits. And, lastly, let those who would resist this habit, consider the difficulties, the dangers, the sorrows, that lie in the path of all to their eternal home—the secret pangs, the untold agonies, the hidden wrongs—thus the heart will grow soft with pity towards our kind. How can I tell what that person suffers ? That fault will cost them dear enough without my aid. Thus you will fear, by a hard word, to add to that which is too much already, as we shrink from putting the finger on a sore. And, lastly, accustom yourselves to entreat Heaven for your fellow-creatures, asking pardon and forbearance of God towards what is wrong in them—then I am sure you will not be eager to expose, and hasty to condemn them. Strenuously accustom yourself to all these things from your childhood upward, and it may be that the disgraceful thistle will not grow.

Peggy Mum.

There are some
Who look for nothing in the time to come,
Nor good nor evil, neither hope nor fear,
Nothing remains or cheerful or severe.

* * * * *
Leave her, and let us her distress explore ;
She heeds it not—she has been left before.—CRABBE.



MY young readers have often complained to me that I tell no stories. They might as well complain that the baker sells no sugar-plums, and the draper

deals not in trinkets—all very good things in themselves ; but of that of which there is enough—we have somewhere made bold to say, too much—there needs no supply of ours. Yet, lest my young friends should believe I think it wrong to write a story, or that I cannot write one, I intend, for once, to conciliate their favour, and compound a story, which, contrary to the ordinary practice of story-tellers, I beg to assure them *is not true*. This is a bold assertion. Am I going to lay aside my office, and, ceasing to listen to the realities of life, take an imaginary flight among things that neither are nor can be ? Most surely not. The skilful lapidary finds his jewels in the mine, shapes them and sets them, and the work is his ; but still the stones are real, and on the reality depends the value of his work. So have I sought in nature the materials of my fiction ; it is made up of truth, though in itself not true—I tell nothing that I have not heard and seen, though not in the form in which I give it. I listened for my materials before I wove my tale.

One of the hottest days of an English July, about the hour at which it is usual to set out for a summer-evening's walk ; when the soil had been pulverised by sixteen hours of sunshine, and the light breeze, departing with the sun, had left the atmosphere more suffocating than by day—excepting so far as a sensation of dampness might persuade one it was cool—I too went out to walk, because others did ; though I could not but observe in the dusty hue and dragging gait of all I met, an intimation that all would rather be at home, if they knew what to do with themselves there. The grass was damp, and the paths were dusty : and I was obliged at last to betake myself to the sea-beach, which, as all men know, is not the most easy walking in the world—so that I was just beginning to consider how far it was really agreeable to walk on a summer evening, when my attention was withdrawn from myself by the appearance of a filthy, squalid child at my side. It is impossible to imagine an object more uninteresting and loathsome. The vulgar ugliness of her features seemed rather the result of misery, starvation, and ill-humour than of natural deformity ; her origi-

nally fair skin was burnt and freckled into fiery redness, and her once pale hair clotted into unequal shades of darkness by filth and exposure ; her size bespoke her about seven years old ; but her shrivelled form and the worn expression of her countenance gave to her person an unnatural appearance of age. I looked at her a few moments ; she seemed to be doing nothing, thinking nothing, and feeling nothing ; and questioning within myself what might be the use, or aim, or object of existence in such a brute-like form, I addressed her with the usual question of what was her name. She deigned me no reply, but sufficiently intimated by her looks that she took it to be no business of mine. I tried again, by asking where she lived. At this she impertinently laughed, but still returned no answer ; and carelessly throwing a stone or two into the water, turned her back and walked off. My curiosity was now excited, and I determined to follow her. This was no easy matter to my patience, for she clung round every post she came to, paused to throw the gravel, or make faces, at every dirty child she met ; and put her fist through the railing of every garden, to tear away the flowers, which she immediately scattered. At last she stopped at much such a dwelling as I might have expected—a miserable hovel close to the high-road, formed of the shattered remnant of a boat. The dwelling contained a single room, with a door standing open, a low mud chimney, and a small window without glass, of which the wooden shutter was already closed, or probably had not that day been opened.

My guide entered ; and to her astonishment, and apparently no great satisfaction, so did I. In one corner, or rather one half of the hovel, was a sort of bedstead, without bed or mattress, on which lay the figure of a woman, nothing beneath her but a threadbare blanket, or above her but a sort of ragged coverlet, of which it was impossible, through the dirt, to discern the colour or texture. There was in her features what had been, and that but recently, both youth and beauty—yet now they were haggard, harsh, and almost ghastly. She looked at me, but made no motion

of surprise or pleasure, nor gave the least expression of civility. "You seem ill, good woman?" I said.

"Yes," she replied, "and, please God, I shall soon be worse."

I was much struck with her manner of speaking these words, totally free from the coarse broad accent of the country people in these parts, yet strongly marked by a deathly hollowness of voice, and the reckless daring of a hardened heart. "Is death, then, desirable to you?" I said. "What cannot be worse may be better, they say," she answered.

"But may not your case be worse," I answered, "in the world of which you know not yet the" —

She interrupted me with a long "Ay!" that at once announced the carelessness and the impatience of one who listens to an old story of which the interest is past.

I scarce knew how to proceed; I took a seat that had not been offered me, and drawing it close to her bed, attempted to put as much kindness as I could into my voice and manner while I questioned her of her illness and condition. She shewed no unwillingness to communicate, but still there was a hardened despondency in all her answers that seemed to reject assistance or consolation; and, to my assurance that I would give her anything she needed, she only replied with indifference, "Ay, I daresay you will; I shall not want anything long."

She replies to me, I thought, as to one who has done her wrong — but that is impossible. Willing to try another point, I reverted to the child, and asked if it was her only one — "Ay, please God!" she answered again.

"My friend," I said, "that word is often in your mouth, but it does not seem to me that you hold it in much reverence."

"As much as others, belike," the woman answered. Again there was something in her tone which implied that, however bad she might be, she did not consider me any better.

"Has that child of yours no employment? Does she not go to school?"

"She may do what she can when her mother is gone," said the wretched woman, with some emotion; "and I suppose they will teach her what they taught me."

I was inexpressibly moved by this first symptom of feeling; I had observed, too, a delicacy of person and a correctness of expression, that belied the stern ruggedness of her voice and manner, and I was determined to know more. "It does not seem to me, good woman, that you have always been in this situation; have you been always so badly off?"

"Never till I deserved it," she answered, while an almost convulsive agony distorted every feature, and her eyes grew liquid with tears, which no mention of her sufferings or her wants had before extracted.

"I should like to know your story," I replied.—"There is One above who is the sinner's friend, and who"—

"He is not mine!" she eagerly subjoined, "nor ever has been since"—

"Since you neglected him and broke his laws? but perhaps now, if you"—

"Ay, ay!" said the woman, with her former sullen air, "you need not tell me about that—they taught me all that; but they did not mind it, and I did not mind it—and," looking steadfastly in my face, "you do not mind it, I dare-say."

This woman, thought I, is neither ignorant, thoughtless, nor unfeeling. Some deep-rooted memory of wrong, some fatal impression from past events, remains upon her mind, and makes her what she is;—and I determined to pursue my inquiry till I traced her story and her sufferings to their source. I visited her often, and gained her confidence, and by degrees extracted from her the following melancholy tale which I give as in her own simple words, though not all at once, and in exact order, received from her:—

"My name was Peggy Lum. My father kept a poulticer's shop at the corner of the High Street, and he had no child but me. The farthest I can remember is, that he taught me on the Sunday evening the Lord's Prayer, and the Belief, which he told me was my religion; and for what he

called my learning—for having but one child, and being well to do in the world, he was determined I should have both—he sent me to a day-school in the next street, for which he paid sixpence a week, being twopence more than the schools to which most of my acquaintance went; and this, of course, made me a greater person than they. But this was not my only distinction; I had a clean coloured frock twice a week, wore white stockings, and had my shoes blacked every morning; for my father said his child should be always decent, though she wore no finery. There was not in the town of H—— so happy a child as Peggy Lum, nor one so envied. My sense of superiority gave me a feeling of high responsibility for my conduct. I would not, for the world, have been heard to use an evil word, or have been seen playing in the streets, neither should it be ever said that I tore my books or pucker'd my work; these were accidents that befell all beside, but never could be charged to Peggy Lum, the boast of the mistress, and the pride of the school.

“ When I was twelve years old, my mother suggested that it was time I learned to be useful, and I was accordingly kept at home to clean the house and pick the poultry; but that I might not lose my learning and my religion, I was allowed to attend a Sunday-school, superintended by some excellent ladies in the parish. Here Peggy Lum was equally distinguished above her fellows. She never came too late, she never wore flowers in her bonnet, whispered at church, or forgot the text. Every lady took notice of my good manners, said kind things to me, and what was of more consequence, took extraordinary pains in instructing me. I could read my Bible well, but I had hitherto never understood its meaning, nor indeed had ever supposed it had a meaning. Those kind ladies explained it to me all, and especially the commandments, which I had been taught to repeat by heart; and some things they told me, I remembered, alas! when—but I shall come to it. And so I grew up, the neatest, quietest, and civilest girl, as they said, of all the school; and when at fifteen my parents said

it was time I should go out to service, there was quite a dispute among the ladies who should have me. I was disposed of at last to a family of respectability in the town, of which some of the ladies had interested themselves about the school ; and I was not a little satisfied with the persuasion that I should continue to be bettered by their precepts and example. It was my place to attend on the ladies, and sometimes help to wait at table, and answer the bell ; and most happy still was Peggy Lum in the approbation and kind treatment she met with ; and every night when I went to bed—for I had been taught now from whom all good things come—I gave thanks to God for the fair portion he had allotted me on earth.

“ While I was in this situation, there came one day a single rap at the door, which I opened ; a woman presented herself, and with a mysterious air, and sort of undertone, drew from beneath her apron a bundle, which she gave me, and bade me take it to the ladies, but not let anybody else see it. I hesitated, for I remembered that when I was at the Sunday-school, the ladies taught me whatever needed concealment was likely to be wrong. The woman, seeing my hesitation, whispered, with a significant look, ‘ Some silks, ma’am, some silks—you’ll please to shew them to the ladies.’ Not having any reason to give why I should not, I did as I was bidden, and conveyed the parcel up stairs, rather anticipating a reproof, though I knew not why ? By no means. The ladies spread the contents of the bundle on the table, and eagerly descanted on their merits ; and very soon the woman was desired to add her presence to the council. I now understood the matter—to every fault found to the texture or the price, the vendor answered that they were French ; though from the frequency of the question, it was evident the ladies did not themselves know whether they were or not. It just came once into my mind, that these ladies used to tell us it did not signify whether our gowns were coarse or fine, so they were neat and becoming our station : yet now it seemed of great importance to them whether the

silk were French or English, though they could not tell which it was when they saw it—but then I recollect that to be sure they were ladies, and I was a servant, and that might make a great difference. At last some purchases were made, and the woman once more placed the bundle under her apron. The ladies asked if she was not afraid to carry it, and what she would do if she met any one. ‘You’ll be pleased, ma’am,’ she said, ‘to let this young woman put me out at the back-door, and just look that no one is about, and tell the other servants that I came about some old clothes from your ladyships, if they should see my bundle, just.’ To my great surprise the ladies assented. Never before had I heard them assent to a falsehood, or connive at a deception—but then they knew best, and it was no business of mine. Happily no one seeing her, I escaped the falsehood I was desired to tell.

“I waited that day at table—there was some company, and the subject of the morning purchases was brought up. A gentleman asked the ladies if they felt no scruple upon the subject of smuggling. They replied, that they did not see any harm in it. ‘And pray, ma’am,’ said the gentleman, ‘do you see any harm in stealing?’ I thought of the eighth commandment. The lady smiled assent. ‘And may I ask you what is stealing?’ I thought I could have answered that, for they had told me often enough in explanation, that it was taking that which belonged to another; and now they replied something to the same purpose. ‘And may I further ask, is the duty you evade, or the revenue you lessen, by the purchase of smuggled goods, your own or another’s?’ The ladies replied, that defrauding the government was not the same as defrauding an individual. The gentlemen asked in what part of the law of God such a distinction was made or intimated. The ladies could not point out such a passage, and I could not myself think of one; but I supposed there might be, since I was sure they knew the Scripture better than I. Some one said she did not see why a portion of the profit of manufactured goods should belong to the government. ‘You know, madam, probably, why this house and

grounds belong to you.'—'Because they belonged to my father, and therefore are mine by natural right.'—'I beg your pardon—by natural right everything belonged to him who took it first—and there are places, and have been times, when your father's property would not be yours.'—'But now it is mine by law.'—'Exactly so—and he would commit theft who would deprive you of it. By law the profits of the revenue are another's, and not yours; and, pardon me, you commit theft if you appropriate it to yourself, or in any way deprive the rightful claimant.'—'But these laws are oppressive and injurious, and ought to be abrogated.'—'That admits of difference of opinion—but at present it is law; and if every one may break the law that does not please him, there is not a malefactor in the kingdom but may say the law that condemns him is a bad one.' I did not understand any part of the reasoning—but I concluded that, as my ladies were so very good, they most likely were right, and that there could be no harm in smuggling. One of them said, that to be sure it might not be quite right, and that in the purchase of spirits, tea, &c., where it was only to save the duty, she should hesitate to smuggle; but in articles that could not lawfully be purchased at all, she was obliged to do it. 'Certainly,' replied the gentleman, 'if it is more necessary to you to wear French silk than to do right.' I opened my ears wide at this; for I remembered how many times I had been told, it never could be necessary to do wrong; that to do right was the most important of all things—and by the very lady, too, who now said she must do what she allowed was not quite right, because she wanted a certain sort of dress. But it was not for me to be wiser than my betters. The dinner was ended, and I left the room; and excepting when I repeated the eighth commandment, or saw French silk now and then by chance, I do not remember that I thought any more about what I had heard, till the sad days that I am going to tell of.

"Meantime my years went on. The ladies liked me, and made me presents, and increased my wages: and in all the house it was who but Peggy Lum. And now I began to

save a little money, besides buying myself now and then a good book, such as my mistress recommended me, over and above a prayer-book with gilt edges, and a large-print Bible. And when my mother fell sick and died, I was able to buy for her many little comforts she had not got, besides sitting often by her bed, and explaining the Bible to her as it had been explained to me—and many and many were the times she said it was a comfort to her death-bed that her Peggy had turned out so well—and sure it was a comfort to me to hear her say it—and many times I gave thanks to God for all his mercies ; for I knew it was he who had made me what I was ; and with all my heart I praised him that I was Peggy Lum and nobody else ;—little did I then think what I should come to !

“ By this time I was twenty years of age, and as comely a young woman, so they said, as any in the parish. I had a great many suitors—but I always consulted my ladies about them, and they generally persuaded me not to marry, because, as they said, I was better off. I thought so for a while ; but at last I began to think the time was getting on, and I had better settle myself ; so I was married, one mid-summer day, to a young man who had been a gardener in a gentleman’s family, and having saved a little money, was going to take some ground, and raise fruit and vegetables for the market. To be sure he had not quite so much learning as I had ; and having never been to a Sunday-school, he did not so well understand his Bible and Catechism ; but he was honest, sober, and industrious, and loved his church, and bore a very good character ; and my mistresses said if I wished to marry, I could not do better—and he was besides a very good-looking young man ; so we were married, and all the ladies went to church with us, and we had great feastings, and crowds of lookers-on, and all the parish knew it was Peggy Lum’s wedding.

“ And now I was surely happier than I had ever been before ; and I wondered how God should never be tired of blessing me. I had a little cottage in the garden which was all my own. It is true my kitchen was not so good as

that I had left at my mistresses', nor my fire so bright, nor my bed so soft, nor my table so plentifully spread—but then it was my own. And it is true I worked harder, for I had more to do than to walk up and down stairs and wait upon the ladies—but then I worked for myself and those I loved, and not for hire: and who does not know the difference? And who ever looked back from the little that is her own to the much that was not hers? The rich leavings of my mistresses' table were never so sweet to my taste as the pork I had salted for myself, and the cabbage that grew in my own husband's garden. I had children—ah! and brave children were they too, as ever mother's eyes have looked upon—as straight as beautiful; their white hair curled upon their heads; their eyes"—

Here the wretched woman's voice began to falter, the tears chased each other rapidly down her ghastly cheeks, her eyes wandered towards the corner where her unsightly offspring was skulking, as if to make a comparison between what she remembered and what she saw—but it was all too much: an agony of unutterable feeling convulsed her frame, and for that time closed her narrative.

As the unfortunate Peggy Lum was enabled from time to time to renew her story, the following was its melancholy purport:—

" My husband cultivated most industriously his little garden, and for a time it seemed to answer to his toil. The pease and beans he raised, I gathered and carried to market—I weeded his beds, and I watered his strawberries; and when he grumbled at the prospect of a bad crop, I told him the times and the seasons were with the Lord, and that we should be content—for so I had been taught while I was young. When Saturday night came, we reckoned up our gains, and saw what we had taken above what our rent and our expenses came to; and it was always enough, bating now and then a little, to live on for the next week. And light were our hearts, and glad were our bosoms, on the Sabbath-day that followed such a reckoning; what remained to us was our own—it was all we wanted for that week; and

before the next the cherries would be ripe, or the potatoes would be fit for digging, or something would be sure to come in to supply our daily necessities. And so we went on, and so we prospered, for a year or two. But God was tired of us, or we were tired of him ; or he knew, as well he might, that we only served him while he blessed us, and should disobey him as soon as things went wrong. Some way or other our fortune took a turn. My husband had a long illness, and was obliged to hire a man to keep his garden—and then, when the doctor's bill came in, we did not exactly know how to pay it, and sold off all the potatoes we were used to keep for winter, when they would fetch better prices—and when winter came, we had not the potatoes to take to market, and so on Saturday night there were no profits, and we were obliged to live on credit all the week. And when summer came again, there was an old score to pay off—and it was a bad year for gooseberries, and my children had the measles—and the next winter was worse than the last : the rent was behindhand—and to be sure it did grieve my foolish heart when Easter Sunday came, and my children could not have their new bonnets, as they were used to do, and their mother before them. But oh ! I was happy then—happy when worse befell—when the rent could not be paid, and the garden was to be given up, and the furniture was to be sold : and my own little cottage, and the roses I had planted, and the honeysuckles I had trained, and all my fine things, were to pass over to another. Oh ! I was happy even then to what I was in the times that came after—for then it was no fault of mine.

"We got into a hut by the roadside ; my husband went out to day-work, and I earned now and then a shilling at charring and one way or another ; and when we might have wanted bread, there came often to my door a lady or so, that had known me in my better days, and gave me a shilling for old friends' sake, bidding me trust to Providence. Thus even here we did not much amiss, if we had but been contented. But it happened one day—O luckless woman ! that should live to see that day !—we had been more short

of money than usual—to spare my husband's meal at night, I had not eaten anything myself that day—the children's frocks were getting very ragged, and I had not the means to buy them new ones—I was just folding them up, after putting the brats to bed, and my wicked heart was getting ready to murmur against God, when a handsome carriage stopped in the road before my door ; two ladies, richly dressed, alighted from it, and, desiring the coachman to drive about, advanced to the door of my poor dwelling. I could not directly guess what they wanted, for they were strangers, and they looked about them more as if they came to do some harm than any good : so I curtsied, and waited till one of them, still looking behind her, asked if I did not sell gloves. I told her no, for that to be sure was a plain case. She still hesitated, as if she did not believe me, and said she had been directed to this cottage. I then recollect ed there was a cottage further up the row, where some people lived who were known to be smugglers ; and though I had never had any acquaintance with them, I supposed they might sell gloves, and answered the lady accordingly, pointing out the house ; but surely, as I yet held in my hands my children's ragged frocks, I did wish I had something to sell that they would like to buy. The ladies went away,—and alas ! my foolish woman's heart went after them, and in my wicked curiosity I resolved to see what they were going about ; so I followed under pretence of shewing the way, and loitered about the casement to listen. Dozens by dozens the gloves were produced, and this pair and that pair was chosen, till there was quite a pile of them ; and then out came the silks, and the shawls, and the stockings, and after all out came the money ; and many a golden piece glittered on the table, and many a bank-note was unfolded. And whilst my eyes rested upon them wishfully—‘One of those single bits of gold,’ I thought, ‘would serve my hungry babes with food for many and many a day, and replace the ragged frocks besides. The ladies went away, and so did I,—they to their carriage, and I to my hovel—but if their hearts were at rest, mine was not ; envy and discontent were awakened in my bosom ; my children

were asleep, and my husband was not come home ; I set about to get his scanty supper, and for the first time in my life found no heart for the task—for the first time since I came into it I left the floor of my house unswept, and my children's tea-cups unwashed ; and sat down to ruminate upon what had passed. The silks, and the gloves, and the gold, and the notes, were running in my head. 'It is no wonder,' I said, 'that Dame Willum's children are better dressed than mine, since money comes in so fast. Yet Dame Willum never toils as I do ; and her husband is not sober and industrious as mine is ; and if the world says true, neither the one nor the other is any better than they should be.' I knew that Dame Willum's husband was a noted smuggler, and a very bad man ; and therefore I need not have envied them their riches—but evil was in my heart, and the tempter was surely at my elbow ; I never thought of this, but began to consider of the advantage of being a smuggler, and having plenty of money to receive. Conscience was not altogether silent, for I had always considered smugglers a bad set of people ; but then if there was no harm in smuggling, they need not be more wicked than others. And now, though it was many years agone, it came into my head, as naturally enough it might, what I had once heard and seen in my mistresses' house—in those happy days, every moment and every circumstance of which was written in my grateful recollection. My ladies had said there was no harm in smuggling—my ladies had bought smuggled goods—what was I, that I should esteem myself wiser than they ? Had they not taught me to fear God and understand his commandments, and would they be doing wrong ?

"I had just settled this point to my satisfaction, or rather to my inclination, when my husband came in. He looked a little surprised at the disorder of the house, and my sitting idle—but he was a quiet man, so he said nothing, and sat down to his supper. Having waited a little while in patience, he said, 'Peggy, where's the Bible ?'—for ever since we were married, and that was many a year now, I had gone on as my ladies first persuaded me to begin, with reading a chapter

in the Bible to him every night while he ate his supper. I took the book down—but alas! though I was not conscious of it, the Bible and I were no longer of a mind. What wonder, then, I felt but ill-disposed to read it!—I turned over the leaves—I could not find my place—I lost it again as soon as I found it—at last I got through a few verses, but it would not do: my thoughts were elsewhere; and, closing the book—

“‘Jem,’ I said, ‘Dame Willum’s children have food while mine are starving.’ Jem looked amazed, and well he might—for never in all my troubles was he used to hear the language of complaint from me. ‘Our children, Peggy, have eaten the bread of honesty; and though it has been sometimes but a hard morsel, they have thrived upon it, and no man can say they have robbed him to come at it.’

“‘There are wiser in the world than we, Jem, who do not take smuggling to be so much a sin.’

“‘Belike there may,’ said Jem, who was not much a man for arguing, ‘but I have thanked God often that I am no smuggler: and I do not suppose any smuggler ever thanked God that he was one.’

“‘But our children are getting older, Jem, and they should have some schooling—and if the free trade is an honest one’—

“‘I pretend to no learning, Peggy, but a trade that brings men to the prison and the gallows is not apt to be an honest one.’

“‘But I know those that think the law has no right to take men up for such things, and’—

“‘Tis like enough it hasn’t—but I do not see what good that would be to me, if I were in prison, and could not get out.’

“‘One might as well be in prison,’ said I, ‘as living in this hut with our poor children ragged and starved about us, and we without the means to feed and clothe them.’

“And so we left talking for that time, and went to bed. They who remember the first step into some wilful sin, may know how I went to sleep that night—and they who know

what it is to have a wrong purpose in the bosom, with a determination to pursue it, may know how I felt when I awaked. In my dreams I saw a strange confusion of things: sometimes the golden pieces glittering on my table—sometimes the vessel tossed upon the waters, and my husband struggling with the waves—gloves, silks, prisons, chains, coaches, king's officers, and fine-dressed ladies—all jumbled themselves together in my fancy. Never, never till then had I known such slumbers or such a wakening. And well they might be such—for my days of honesty and innocence were done!"

When the wretched woman reached this part of her narrative, her whole voice and manner changed. In telling the story of her better days, she seemed to have recalled the spirit of them. Her voice was gentle and subdued, her manner simple and affecting; and the tears that fell from time to time might well have passed for those of chastened and penitential sorrow. It was but a passing impression, arising from the recollection of early happiness. Now her face resumed its sternness, her voice its bold and reckless daring—the tear no longer fell; but in its place there was an agonised expression in her eye, too vivid almost to be looked on without a shudder.

With a view to still her increasing vehemence, "Peggy," I said, "your sin was doubtless great, but it was not wilful—you did not then know the wrong, or foresee the consequence of your advice."

"Ma'am," said the woman eagerly, "I did know, I did foresee. But for me he had been now an honest man. He knew I had more learning than he, and always believed what I said—he knew how religiously I had been educated, and that I had known God and the Bible before he thought of either, and he did not think I should tell him wrong. It was I who persuaded him—I sent him into the company that corrupted him—I sent him to pass his nights on the wild ocean—I sent him to his death—and perhaps—but there at least I shall go too, and share the mischief I have done him." I entreated the woman to proceed calmly with

her story ; for I saw it needed a stronger power than mine to whisper peace to such a bosom. She proceeded—

“ I did not accomplish my purpose all at once, but from time to time I renewed the subject. Whenever we were short of food, I said I knew where it was to be had ! Whenever I saw Dame Willum’s brats, I said they were better off than mine, though I knew the contrary. Sometimes, indeed, when the wind blew loud all night, my heart misgave me—and sometimes, when I was reading the Bible, my conscience smote me,—but I would not feel, I would not hear, and at last I accomplished my purpose. Jem was a strong and a brave man ; some way or other my foolish talking was heard among the neighbours, and those engaged in the trade came and persuaded and tempted him. In short—for why need I prolong my miserable tale ?—Jem became a smuggler, and from that hour the blessing of Heaven forsook our dwelling—the eye of God was averted from us, sin took its course, and this is what came of it. But you will hear.

“ Things looked well at first : Jem was paid seven or eight shillings a-night—my children were dressed, my children were fed — we got a better house—but what was I with all ?— a miserable, miserable woman ! In the long dark nights, while the wind was blowing and the waves were raging, did I sleep soundly on my comfortable bed, bought with the price of his perils ? When the Sabbath day came, and the bells rung, and I dressed my children in their nice neat clothes, was my heart light as I went forth alone where he was used to go with me ? No—from the first I was a miserable woman, though no one knew it but myself ; and it rapidly grew worse. Jem, unused to the fatigue and exposure of such a service, was forced to take spirits to carry him through it ; necessity soon grew into choice ; obliged to drink when he was out, he chose to drink at home : the coarse and blasphemous language he heard among his desperate companions he repeated before his wife and children ; he laughed at his Bible now, and when I remonstrated with him, he told me, if I had

believed it myself, I should not have wished him to become a smuggler. Oh ! if this had not been so—if he had died as I knew him once, as I once saw him on a bed of sickness—oh, I could have borne it then—but to die so !

“ It was then my last child was born ; she that is yonder—look at her, for she was conceived in iniquity indeed—she was ugly as her father’s and her mother’s sin, and she has been the torment of our lives—her evil disposition has defeated all our efforts to control it—she will learn nothing, do nothing, and does not seem to have wit enough to know good from bad ; though she has enough, God knows ! to get into all the mischief she can find. But the sin is on our heads—she was fed on the bread of iniquity, she heard nothing but oaths and curses from her father and his bad companions—from her mother but fretfulness and reproaches. I had children—but they are gone—my blessings are taken from me, and she is left to be my curse !

“ Some years went on in this way : at times we had plenty of money ; but as my husband drank and gamed, we were at other times much distressed. One day when he came home rather more sober than usual—‘ Peggy,’ he said, ‘ the blood of a fellow-creature is on my hand ! ’ I shuddered, and so I thought did he—for we had known, we had sometime felt, the commands of God ; we had believed them once, and once had feared to disobey them ; and, though we had contrived to persuade ourselves that smuggling did not break the eighth commandment, we could not well persuade ourselves that murder did not break the sixth. My husband had killed a man in a fray ; and though he was never discovered, he was ever after that as one desperate and careless of what might follow.

“ On one occasion my children were sick ; we had spent all our money, and I was advised to go to some charitable lady in the town, and ask for nourishment for them. I went, and was conducted to the lady : but as soon as she heard my name, she said my husband was a bad character, my house was a notorious place of drinking and wickedness, and she could not by any means encourage me. I

looked at her, for I thought I had seen her once before—but whether I had or not, I whispered, as I walked away uncomforted, 'If it had not been for you or such as you, we had never been what we are:' and I went home with my bosom hardened in sin and aggravated in wretchedness, by the repulse of those whom I considered as the cause of both. For think not that my first sin had been the only one—no, it is a road on which she who starts is driven forward as with stings and scourges. By degrees I had ceased to go to church or to read at home, because it reminded me of the days that were gone; I could not bear the recollection; and I could not bear to see the minister, who used to talk kindly with me, go by me now without notice. I also ceased to teach my children good; for I feared lest they should compare it with the ill they saw, and I should but be teaching them to hate and despise their parents. Yet did my heart yearn over them as the destined prey of the Evil One, given by their own parents to destruction. In one of my better moments, as I looked upon that graceless girl, my heart was moved towards her with pity and with shame, for I had taught her nothing: and I resolved to make one effort to save her from destruction, by asking for her from others what I could no longer render her myself. I knew the days on which a committee of ladies were to meet for benevolent purposes, especially for the supporting of a school for the indigent, and I knew that in this school the children were carefully and religiously taught. I took my neglected offspring in my hand, and presented myself before them to solicit admission for her into the school: it was the first right thing I had done for many a day, and there was a peace in my bosom it had become but little used to. When I had made my request, I was asked my name, and the occupation of my husband. Oh that the time should have come when such questions would bring shame to the cheek of Peggy Lum! I equivocated a little on the latter question, but the ladies understood my language, and told me with some harsh expressions, that my child could not be

admitted, as they had many applications, and always gave the preference to those whose parents followed an honest calling. My bosom was ready to burst with grief and indignation—yes, indignation—for, as I looked round the circle, I saw the contraband articles about their persons! I knew well enough the gloves on the hands of one and the handkerchief round the neck of the other—and my child was rejected, cast off, left to ignorance and vice, because her father pursued for subsistence a trade that they encouraged for the ornament of their persons! With some show of impertinence, which still more confirmed their rejection of me, I was leaving the house, when a lady of a very kind aspect whispered me, that she would call and talk to me about putting the child to school somewhere. But the last spark of good was extinguished in my bosom—the last good purpose I ever formed was repulsed in a way that completed the hardening of my heart—‘No,’ I said, as I walked along, scarce knowing where I went, ‘she shall neither go to their schools nor learn their learning. If she sin, as she will do, it shall be in ignorance and stupidity: they shall not teach her the will of God, only to make her more guilty when they afterwards teach her to disobey Him. They taught me first the meaning of moral and religious honesty; then they told me by words and by example, that there was no harm in a secret and unlawful trade—and now that I come to them with the wretchedness in my heart, and the ruin on my head, which were brought on me by that trade, they reject my supplication, and put scorn upon my guiltless child, because I have pursued it. No—not a child of mine shall go: if she must follow in her mother’s course, she shall go there without her feelings:’ and when the kind lady did, in fact, come and offer to put the child to school at her own expense, I obstinately, and insolently, rejected the proposal; and thus made myself guilty of my child’s as well as my husband’s ruin.

“But the measure was full, and the time was come, and my tale will soon be told. My eldest boy was now a lad of sixteen, and never since he had come into the world had he

made his mother's heart to ache. He was the birth of better days, for he was the first-born child I had. The good impressions of his early years had lasted him through worse ones—he had been to school, and since that he had been to sea in a collier ; and in spite of all the ill he heard when he came home, he was ever a good and steady lad. It was some time now that he had been out of employ, and had got a sort of hankering to go out with his father ; only, as he said, for a bit of sport, for he was a brave boy, and loved danger and the seas ; but he loved his mother better, and he had ever till then yielded to her entreaties not to go. One night—yea, that night, that very night—there was rough work to be done, and they wanted hands—there was danger, and they offered high pay. My boy's spirit was roused, his father persuaded him, and when I would have retained him even with tears, my husband said that since I did not care about *his* being drowned or murdered, he did not see why I should make so much ado about the boy. They were the last words he ever spoke to me. They were not true—for in all his wickedness Jem had been kind and affectionate to me ; and it was not for me to love him less for sins that I myself had driven him to. They were not true words—but, oh ! I remembered them when—Remembered ! I remember them now—I hear them in my sleep, I hear them in my dreams, they are whispered about my bed, and about my pillow. Grant, Heaven, they come not after me to the grave !

“They went, and surely something in my heart misgave me of what was coming : for I felt I could not go to bed that night. It was already dark when they went away ; and many a time I opened the casement to look out upon the night. The wind howled frightfully. I heard the waves thundering upon the rocks, as if they would have rent the firm earth in pieces ; and so dark was it, that when, in my restlessness, I went out to try it, I could not find my way across the road. Not a star was there in all the heavens, not a bit of moon to light them on their perilous way—’twas ever such nights as these they chose to do their boldest

deeds. Hour after hour I listened, though I knew not for what, for they were miles away. I shuddered at the silence—I started even at the noise I made myself, as from time to time I threw on a log to keep the fire burning, that they might warm and dry them when they came. I saw my neglected Bible on the shelf, and remembered the time when it would have consoled me—but not now: I remembered when in times of fear and danger to those I loved, I should have betaken myself to prayer—but not now. I could but sit and watch the dial-plate, and long, and long for the hours of darkness to be gone. And when they were gone, and the daylight opened, I liked it no better. I looked out upon the damp, cold landscape, and thought it was like my desolated bosom; the very light was hateful to me; for surely the truth was in my heart, though yet I knew it not. The morning grew apace; the people in the surrounding cottages came forth to their honest labours. I saw one and another making ready the breakfast for her husband, and giving a parting word to her boys—but where were mine? Nine o'clock struck, ten, eleven, and still they came not. This was no uncommon thing, but there was a presentiment of evil in my bosom. The clock was just upon the point of twelve, when I heard a noise of voices—I went out and saw a crowd about Dame Willum's door. I knew her husband had been out with the party, and guessed the rest: 'Where is Jem?' I said to the first who would hear me. 'He will be here presently,' said the man in a sullen tone. I had no more to ask—everybody was talking, and everybody was eager to tell the worst they could make of the fearful story. All murdered, all drowned, all prisoners! And soon there was not even need to listen, for my eyes beheld the worst—the dead body of my husband, borne upon the shoulders of ruffianly-looking men, whose down-cast looks bespoke that even they felt pity for his fate. And where was my boy? Him the cold waters held, and would not give me back so much as his lifeless body! The smugglers had been attacked in endeavouring to remove their cargo; they resisted; some were slain on the spot,

and the rest were drowned in attempting to escape. Who will tell out the story? Who will tell the wife's, the mother's agony, when she received of her husband no more but the disfigured corpse—of her son, not even so much as that! Tell who may, I cannot. But you see me, what I am—I have told you what I was. Want, and disease, and remorse, and agony, have brought me to the grave. What is beyond, you may know; I do not—I believed once, now I dare not believe."

The story is finished—need I write the moral? If my readers believe I have drawn an exaggerated picture, let them inquire and know. They will not, perhaps, find Peggy Lum upon her death-bed, nor meet her squalid offspring in their evening walk—but they will find more misery resulting from this traffic than language of mine can picture. They may see, as we have done, the suspected fall under our windows. They may see, as we have done, three or four at a time, the murdered bodies borne into the churchyard—and they may hear, as we do daily, the thoughtless multitude, one moment repeating the melancholy story, the next moment creeping about the lanes and alleys, in search of the vendors of forbidden goods. It is for such that I have told the story. The miserable victims of this traffic will not read our pages, nor is it for them that I have written. They are incapable of appreciating the moral wrong of the traffic itself; the only question to them is the gain and loss, the risk and the inducement—and in this, as in all other sorts of gambling, we know that men will put all they have on the stake, if the prize proposed be large enough. To these poor creatures the inducement is their daily sustenance, the support of their wives and children: that they ruin them eventually is beyond their calculation; for we know, that in exact proportion as the mind is uncultivated, its feelings and cares are limited to the present time. Much, therefore, is to be said in excuse for them. But what is to be said for us? It is the purchaser that makes the trade. Can we, without compunction, see the lives of our fellow-creatures put to venture, their families plunged into misery unspeak-

able, their morals corrupted, their souls, it may be, ruined eternally—and all for what? To save a few shillings, which we would freely give to any one who needed it, or to deck our persons with some prohibited article of dress? I fully believe, there is not a lady in Britain who would not take the costly shawl from her shoulders, and present it to the person whom she could thereby save from such misery as we have described, though the consequence were that she should never wear another—and yet we expose to such misery hundreds and thousands of our fellow-creatures, and when it is named to us, think it quite enough to say, "French goods are prohibited, and we must have them, because"—most sufficient reason!—"because we like them best."



Social Kindness.

Vivre en soi ce n'est rien ; il faut vivre en autrui
A qui puis-je être utile, agréable aujourd'hui ?
Voilà chaque matin ce qu'il faut se dire ;
Et le soir, quand des tieux la clarté se retire,
Heureux à qui son cœur tout bas a répondu,
Ce jour qui va finir, je ne l'ai pas perdu ;
Grâce à mes soins, j'ai vu, sur une face humaine,
La trace d'un plaisir ou l'oubli d'une peine !
Que la société porterait de doux fruits,
Si par de telles pensées nous étions tous conduits !



HERE was somewhere—not in England, I should suppose—a very extensive prison-house, in which immense numbers of persons were confined under suspicion, for they had not yet been tried, of manifold misdemeanours, some in the overt act, and others in hidden disaffection towards a Government to which they all owed allegiance. From the babbling infant, who had come there for his father's crimes, before himself could have committed any, to the hoary head of age, bowing already to the grave that was waiting to receive him—from the coarse, unthinking peasant, who had followed where others led, to the lofty and commanding spirit that must answer for many a crime beside his own—every age was here, and sex and nation—every complexion and condition of mankind were assembled in this vast prison

house, to wait till it should please the sovereign—for in that country there was no Habeas Corpus Act—to come for his far-distant court, and judge the prisoners for the crimes of which they stood accused.

Around this strange abode, there was a wall too high for any foot to scale, too thick for any eye to penetrate, in order to discover what might be beyond it. Within the limit, the imprisoned seemed to walk at large—there was space for all to live and move at ease, but not without perpetually crossing each other's way, and coming in near and frequent contact; and if any would have fled from his fellows, he could not, for the wall was round him and about him, and he might not pass it; there were paths many, and ways many, but the impervious barrier was the issue of them all, and "No further," was the fatal check upon their else unrestricted motions. Suspected of unequal crimes, but as yet untried and unconvicted, they were not distinguished from each other by any anticipatory punishments, seeming to suffer promiscuously the hardships inseparable from their state of durance and disgrace. And not few, indeed, were these. Famine, and want, and pain, and misery were there. Some eyes looked upwards in untold despair, as if still to demand of Heaven what to Heaven itself had become impossible to bestow—and some were on the ground in deep despondency, as if they loathed to meet the sunbeam that had shone on scenes now lost to them for ever. Their very pleasures, when they seemed to flourish most, were but as that baleful tree, very fair to look upon, that drops pestilence and death on all who venture to repose beneath its branches. For while the parent sat at ease, fondly administrating to the needs and pleasures of a beautiful family, one by one he saw them sink beneath the hardships of their condition, till there were none remaining. And the bosom that had brought with it all that was needful to its happiness, in sweet possession of which whatever was suffered was scarcely felt, and whatever was wanting was not missed, was doomed to see the pestilential vapour of the prison arise and chill to death the frame of its beloved. Industry toiled hard and

sowed its seed, and forgot in labour, as others in pleasure, the dangers of his state ; and when he should have reaped the fruit, the winds of heaven, from which his prison-house was all unsheltered, had blighted it, and he was left to want. Some, who once had friends, and families, and homes, sat here apart from all, and laid claim to nothing, and found regard of none—and some, whom all caressed and all bowed down to, and who seemed to abound in everything, fed secretly on the ashes of affliction, and fasted from all but tears, consumed by memory of something past, or dread of some half-seen future. The lofty and capacious intellect was there, working its own misery with its own greatness, to which there was nothing to respond, and which nothing in that small space could satisfy. And feebleness, and ignorance, and imbecility were there also, suffering contempt, neglect, and scorn, for deficiencies not of their own choosing. And though there were some on whose cheek the bloom was fresh, and in whose eye the beam of joy was bright, they were regarded by the more experienced, as but the less conscious victims of as sure a fate ; for it was known they could not evade, though they might forget, the consequences of their suspected character. And to all, and to each, besides the unequal sufferings of their actual state, there remained the approaching judgment to which they were reserved, coming they knew not when, threatening they knew not what ; more awful for its uncertainty, more appalling for the obscurity that hung upon the issue.

Does not the question forcibly suggest itself, How would these prisoners conduct themselves towards each other ? Involved in one common calamity, standing in the same fearful predicament, compelled, willing or unwilling, to remain together, to take of the same scanty comforts, and abide the same but too sufficient ills—each one liable to whatever the other was enduring, and no one secure from succeeding to his neighbour's woe—how does it seem they would deport themselves to each other in this strange condition ; which had brought them together without their leave, and forced them to abide each other's company, with-

out any choice of theirs ? Reason, and common sense, and feeling, nay, and self-interest itself, are agreed upon the answer—kindness, courtesy, and pity would be the tone of such society. They would not all love each other—dissimilar habits, uncongenial tempers, varieties of intellect and condition, would make that impossible : they would not all esteem each other—for defect of moral worth in some, in others native imbecility or deformity of character, would render them no objects of esteem. But there would surely prevail in this society a tone of benevolence and courtesy, the result of a participated destiny. The untried criminal would not begin beforehand the punishment of his fellow-criminals, by treating them according to the measure of their supposed, though yet undecided guilt. However much unlike, no one could stand off from another as a being with whom he had no feelings or interests in common. The common misery, the common danger, would create a fellowship between the most opposite characters, that would claim a word, a look at least, of kindness, as they went by each other, or sat down together in the narrow limits of their prison-house. It would seem that one could scarcely have a concern in which the others felt no interest, a feeling that the others would not wish to spare, a desire the others would not wish to gratify—from sympathy if not for love, from pity if not esteem. And least of all would those who had most hope of pardon and favour from the sovereign, when he came, look coldly on those with whom it might fare worse—a sense of their own danger would teach them pity, and conscious guilt would make them merciful. Here, in short, the wisest would see in the most simple, the noblest in the basest, a being whom, if nature had placed afar, suffering and danger had brought near of kin.

Some one has wisely said—our readers may have observed before now that we always think that saying wise which agrees with our own opinions—and beautifully as wisely said, “Courtesy is, strictly speaking, a Christian grace. It is a plant of heavenly origin. This present evil world, like the ground which the Lord hath cursed, is utterly incapable

of yielding anything so good and lovely. Courtesy cannot grow in selfish nature's soil. It is never found but in the garden of God." I had just been reading this very pretty sentence, as quoted for my observation in the letter of a friend, when passing into society, I happened to hear it boldly asserted that it is not desirable to make ourselves agreeable to those we do not like, and warmly contested that universal courtesy is almost a sin. "So then," I said within myself, "here are opinions in most determined opposition—the plant that one would cherish as the very growth of Heaven, the other plucks up and casts away as a noxious and pernicious weed." I had dwelt with pleasure on the former sentiment as true, and just, and beautiful—but what then becomes of the other? They cannot both be just or both be true. Yet it seemed to me of some importance, that they who are beginning the business of life should perceive between the flower and the weed; and, setting myself to consider of the matter, it appeared to me that this world of ours is no other than the prison-house described, and our condition in it that which we have depicted. How then does it seem that we should behave?

It has pleased God, for reasons wise since they are his, to form the inhabitants of earth in moulds so different, that each one cannot assimilate with another—like ill-accorded instruments, well-tuned perhaps, and perfect in themselves, but which yet can make no harmony together, because the pitch of one is higher than the other. It has pleased Him, too, to endow our minds with feelings, known and understood by all, though difficult to define, that draw us towards some persons in preference to others, and while we go by the mass with indifference, bind us with indissoluble affection to some selected few; for no reason that can be given, but a natural and spontaneous preference; or perhaps some affinity of tastes, principles, and pursuits. These selected few, for, however many, they are few in the comparison, are what we usually call our friends; and to these our deportment may be left to other influence, and guided by other rules, than those of general courtesy. But these apart, the

larger mass of those with whom we are brought in contact, are persons for whom, to use the common expression, we do not care—we have no choice or preference for them. It is to these that a habit of universal courtesy is or is not to be cultivated—that we are or are not to take pains to render ourselves as agreeable and acceptable as circumstances and higher duty will permit.

We know there is a sinful conformity to the world that is forbidden ; and whatever that may be defined to be, we beg not to be understood to desire that the line be broken ; for God must not be offended that man be pleased, and sin must not be committed from any motive of expediency whatever. But civility, attention, regard to the tastes, and respect for the feelings of others, are not sins—on the contrary, they are the plant that has been asserted to be of Christian growth, a flower of the garden of God. We are aware, also, that it will be contested there is a degree of insincerity and deception in assuming an appearance of attention and complacency towards those for whom we have no regard, nor any kindly feelings. Be it admitted, however, that we ought to have kindly feelings towards every one. Criminals chained to the same galley, slaves fettered and toiling in the same mine, are not more closely conjoined in one common fate, have not more claim upon each other's sympathy, than men inhabiting together this prison-house of earth. We ought to have a feeling of benevolent interest for every one of mortal birth—our aversions, our contempt, our disunion, our animosity, all these things are defects, blemishes, symptoms of mental corruption and disease—and if they cannot be eradicated, we are obliged to any garb of decency that can contribute to conceal them. Our Christian perfection would be to have no unkindly feelings towards any one—and the next best thing to this is to be conscious of them and ashamed of them, and endeavour to conceal them as we would a loathsome and unsightly wound : the effort is a self-sacrifice, and will go far to subdue the feeling. It may be asserted again, that a universal desire to please and to oblige is dangerous to ourselves, as it may be the offspring of vanity, too eager

for the approbation of men, and ever seeking its own gratification. It may be so: but in this case it is the motive, not the conduct, that needs to be amended. To pay a courteous attention to those who do not particularly please us—to give satisfaction to those who can give us none—is, as we have observed, a sacrifice of our selfishness that may proceed from the highest tone of Christian principle.

Are we, then, to be as courteous, and to attempt to be as agreeable, to those whom we do not admire, or perhaps do not approve, as those whose qualities and principles claim our esteem and approbation? We need not choose them for our companions, or take them to the confidence of our bosoms—we need not seek them or desire them—but our house is narrow; the path we go on is straight; the way is crowded, and we must be much in contact; the duties and intercourse of life must bring us into connexion with those whom we did not and could not choose. And what are we, that we should feel contempt or disregard for any one? If others have their peculiarities, have we not ours? If they have their defects, have we not ours? nay, and our vices, too, for which we are all hastening forward to an equal judgment? And in this narrow house of our sojourning, surely every one has a claim to what every one can do to make sweet the bitterness of life? For, oh! there is enough for all to bear—the dwellers in that prison-house were not so happy that there was no need of each other's courtesy to soften their condition; there was not so much scarcity of suffering, that the conduct of one should prejudge the other's crimes, and aggravate the punishment prepared for him. And who are those we think unworthy of our attention and civility, unworthy the care to please? beings, perhaps more worthy than ourselves, though less externally endowed: they perhaps who, had we been in need, would have cherished us in affliction, would have consoled us, though, needing them not, we have never proved it—some, it may be, who, though we perceive it not, have hearts so deeply tried in sorrow, that, could we know all, our bosoms would yearn with tender pity over what we ignorantly wound by neglect and

incivility—and some, it is more than probable, whatever be the cloud of ignorance or sin that now hangs over them, with whom we are destined to pass a long eternity in the holy fellowship of heaven.

Upon Christian principles, then, we are prepared to say that it is our duty to be courteous, and, as far as may be, agreeable, to all with whom Providence brings us in connexion, whether we meet them for a day or an hour, or the whole compass of our lives. We are not to be idle to please the idle, or ignorant to please the ignorant, or vicious to please the vicious—and if we were, we should not succeed in pleasing them—but we are to laugh with those that laugh, to weep with those that weep—to contribute all we can, in small things as in great, to ameliorate the dark condition of our race, and scatter flowers on a thorny path. If we are in company with those whose tastes and habits are opposed to ours, we are to put some restraint upon our own, that theirs may not be offended: if with those whose manners are disgusting, or tempers uncongenial to us, we are bound to cast a veil over the disgust they undesignedly excite. We are bound to withhold a remark that will give pain, or an opinion that will offend, unless some essential purpose is to be answered by their expression. To say, this is deception or insincerity, is no other than to say, it is deception to restrain any evil passion, or suppress any angry thought or selfish feeling—nor is there anything in manners and tempers we hold more selfish, unlovely, and unchristian, than that sort of self-indulgence which wounds everybody's feelings, under pretext of candour and sincerity. I advise the lovers of so much honesty, to make clean the mansion, and put forth no few of its inhabitants, before they venture to set wide the gates, that all may be witness of what is passing within.

It appears to me, young people cannot go forth into the world under a more false impression, than this persuasion,—that they owe no courtesy to any but those whom circumstances or preference happen to make their friends. They owe it to every individual without exception who has

not forfeited it by offence against them—for every individual is their fellow, and their kindred, and their companion, in a destiny of which the beginning, and the purport, and the issue, are the same ; and, therefore, each one is a claimant on their sympathy and benevolence. To say that we would do them any kindness in their need, or confer any substantial benefit in our power, but refuse to conciliate in our ordinary intercourse, is to offer that which we have not, in excuse for withholding that which we have: our benevolence may never have an occasion of exercise in substantial benefits—in complacency, kindness, and courtesy, and an accommodating spirit, we may always, and to every one, evince it.

We know that the devoted Christian has something more to say respecting the discountenance that should be given to folly and irreligion, the distinction to be made between those who serve God and those who serve him not. This distinction must exist in the feelings of all who sincerely love their Lord : but I cannot see in it an excuse for the cold, repulsive, harsh, unsocial, unconciliating manner, some pious people assume towards those whom they consider less religious than themselves. We are the fellow-criminals, not the judge : whatever be our penitence and hope of pardon, we are here the attainted rebels of our sovereign, not the administrators of his justice ; and whatever be the present promise of his mercy, towards us more than them, his pity takes not its limits from our judgment, and it may be they will enter into the kingdom of heaven before us.

But if still it does not appear that we ought to cultivate habits of kindness, attention, and civility, to all around us—behold, there was One who came into that crowded prison-house, that did not belong to it—its attainted inhabitants were not to his mind—there was no spirit there congenial to his nature, or fitted to hold communion with him—their ways were not as his ways, nor their feelings as his feelings—day by day their discordant natures jarred on his holy bosom, and their impure pursuits revolted his celestial innocence. Yet He walked courteously in the midst of all,

and stood not aloft from any. He wept over their ills, indeed, and he reproved their wrongs : but he kept none at a distance as unworthy his regard : he dwelt with them as a brother and a friend ; took an interest in their lawful occupations, conformed to their habits, and adapted his benefits and his advice to the peculiar character and need of each. Is the subject greater than his King ? Is the servant wiser than his Lord ?



Politeness.

Politeness is the moral grace of life, if I may venture so to term it : the grace of the mind. What the world accounts graces are little more than the graces of the body.—DR BROWN.



ALKING one morning by myself—an unfavourable circumstance for a listener—and in a lonely place where, though I could not please myself as Rousseau did, with believing the foot of man had never trodden, I certainly could discern no traces of his despoiling hand—a fit of enthusiasm, such as poets, I suppose, are subject to, seized upon my brain in favour of nature's unassisted works ; and in most sublime soliloquy I began to decry the assassinations committed by man's sacrilegious hand upon her charms. I compared the briery path I was creeping through with difficulty, to the broad, beaten turnpike : the elegance and simplicity of the wild-flowers, half hiding, half shewing themselves, upon their beds of green, to the trained, and trimmed, and methodically planted flowers of the garden ; trees whence no pruner had ever lopped a branch—grass whence the mower had not filled his scythe, nor the reaper his bosom—recesses, where for years the redbreast had returned to build his nest, and found it as he left it. “What a pity it is,” I exclaimed, “that man should intermeddle with what God has made, and mar the beauties he can never mend ! When all that avarice and vanity suggest has been tried, to torture

our parks and gardens into form, are they to be compared to the wild, woody glade, that knows no training but from nature's hand, yearly returning to re-dress her work?" So I thought, and so have poets said and sung for ages past: and so sure was I growing that every thing should be as nature made it, that it is possible I might have gone on to say, as some have said, that rather than clear a wood for building houses and making turnpikes, it would be advisable to live like our forefathers, in the hollows of trees, and reach our habitation over sting-nettles—had I not, in the midst of my soliloquy, egressed from this same wood, and within ken of man's lamented depredations, found myself upon the beach. It chanced that there was walking there a man who seemed intent on finding something among the pebbles. Often he stooped down to pick them up, and after a little examination, threw them from him—once only I perceived, that having looked at one with attention, he retained it in his hands. "Why," said I, "do you prefer that stone to all the rest?"—"Because," he replied, "it is of value, and they are worth nothing."—"And yet," I answered, "I see no beauty in that, more than in the others—it is a rough brown stone."—"It is so now, and there is no beauty in it; but there is value: when I have cut and polished it, and set it in a golden rim, its beauty will be acknowledged, and rival purchasers will contend for the possession. Come to my laboratory, and I will shew you the richest jewels of the Eastern mine, and you will say they seem but inelegant and worthless stones: see them again upon the brow of royalty, or on the neck of beauty, and you will gaze upon them as nature's most exquisite productions." This was true, but then my soliloquy was absolutely wasted—for here were nature's most valuable, most inimitable, and probably most tedious productions, not only improved by art, but owing to it all their perceptible, though not their real value. The gem was a gem while it lay neglected in the sand; but most would have passed it by unheeded; or, finding, have rejected it as of little value: and even when the worth was ascertained, we doubt much if any lady

would be ambitious to string the unpolished jewels for her bosom, or bind them in her hair.

There are things besides stones that, valuable in themselves, need the factitious aid of ornament to make them lovely. All the polish in the world, it is true, would not make of the worthless stone a diamond ; and whoever knew the value would take the gem without it, and reject the other in its richest brilliancy : but the rich jewel must be set and polished before its beauty is perceived, or with the unskilful the glittering paste may be preferred before it. Is not this a truth too much forgotten by some who think it enough to be good, without remembering to be agreeable ? With some parents, who, while they store the minds of their children with knowledge, and lead them forward in the paths of truth, fearful, perhaps, of fostering vanity, or overlooking the importance of recommending by exterior beauty the interior worth, totally neglect their manners, habits, and appearance ? Is it not so with some young persons, who, earnestly desiring to please God, and loving their fellow-creatures for his sake, do yet misjudgingly despise, or carelessly neglect, those trifles that, trifles as they are, make all the difference between an agreeable and a disagreeable woman : and though they affect not the moral or religious worth, will make that worth the more or the less acceptable and lovely ? Such persons are surely doing wrong, and if professing to be religious, doubly wrong—for the blame will be cast upon their religion, not upon themselves ; they render that unlovely and unattractive which is in itself most beautiful ; they revolt where they ought to win. There is no natural connexion, no possible affinity, between religion and awkwardness, coarseness, and incivility, an unpolished manner or an ungraceful mind. This seems so impossible, that we should not think to speak of it, did we not see every day instances of a mistaken, we could almost say, a proud neglect of these attentions, in persons whose minds are truly occupied with great matters ; and did we not every day hear, without being able to contradict it, that good people are disagreeable. To elder persons and to parents

much might be said—but I listen for the young, and will end my apostrophe with the tale that gave rise to it.

I have heard, or read, of somebody, who, on visiting the magnificent fabrics of Italy, which they had heard were of marble, was very much disappointed to find them not polished from top to bottom, smooth and shining like a marble chimney-piece—for anything they saw, the buildings might as well have been of stone. Much such a dunce, I fear, did I prove myself, when I accepted an invitation from a family of whom I had heard so much good report, that I had long been anxious to be admitted to their society. The excellence of their education, the cultivation bestowed on their minds, and the high religious principles that regulated their conduct, were things of so much notoriety in the neighbourhood, I could not but form the most pleasing anticipation of pleasure in my intercourse with them, and the highest possible estimate of their worth. If I was disappointed, the fault undoubtedly was mine; for their worth was equal to the representation made of it: they were all I have said, and all I had heard: what right had I to expect more? I had heard these young ladies had both talent and principle, and I went prepared to admire and love them. As I stayed some time in the house, I had opportunities of observing them under different circumstances, at home and abroad, in company and alone: what I have to remark, therefore, must not be understood to have passed in one day, or in quite such rapid succession as I tell it; neither did each thing happen once only—I describe their habitual deportment.

When I was first conducted into the house, two young ladies were sitting in the drawing-room, one engaged with her book, the other with her needle: whether each one had a task to perform, and feared the doom's-day clock might strike before it was completed, I cannot say; but neither ceased their occupation when I entered, though, as a guest and a stranger, it might have been expected I should be in some manner received by them in their parents' absence. They answered when I spoke to them, it is true; but they

never made any attempt to address me. Miss Julia kept her elbow on the table, and her head on her hand, in such a position as almost to turn her back towards the sofa on which I was sitting: and even when she did speak, held her eyes as intently fixed on her book as if some magic power held them in perpetual durance. Miss Emma, whose work was of a description I thought might as well have been done in her chamber, or at least removed on the entrance of a guest, was, I perceived, under the influence of some vow not to remove her nose above two inches from her thimble, though there was scarcely a passage between them for the few words my importunity forced from her. The most natural inference from such a reception would have been, that my visit was unwelcome; but I had reason to know the contrary; and I had frequent occasion afterwards to observe that all persons, whether friends or strangers, had to encounter, on their approach, the persevering industry of these ladies. Indeed, whoever desired the Miss B.'s civility, must wait for it; for when, a few days after, I introduced to them in our walk some young persons with whom I knew they desired intimacy, they gave an inclination of the head, with a look that might very well be mistaken for a frown, turned their backs immediately, and went on with their own conversation. Be it not, however, supposed that the Miss B.'s could not communicate, or would not—when it was perfectly convenient to themselves. Julia was indeed of a temper silent and reserved, though wanting neither feeling nor affection; Emma was lively and animated in the extreme. It was easy to perceive that the same effects in each had resulted from different causes: in Julia, from an indolent indifference to things she considered not essential—in Emma, from a contempt of what she believed beneath her.

There was company that evening, and having found the young ladies so extremely agreeable alone, I was curious to see what they might be in society. They did not, however, think it necessary to be ready for some time after they were expected in the room. At length Miss Julia made her appearance through the doorway—one might almost say

through the door—for she opened it but barely wide enough to force her small person through the interstice. Whether there was any one present she was glad to see, remained a riddle; so eager was she to get possession of the nearest corner of the nearest chair she could find, seeming by no means aware that she might sit as safely in the middle of it; and having reached the port, she took care to leave it no more that night. Emma's approach was by no means so peaceful: with the assistance of a gust of wind, she contrived to startle everybody from their seats by the banging of the door, stumbled over two stools and a work-table before she reached the upper end of the room, and went down on the sofa with a bang, that, had her specific gravity been greater, might have endangered the fragile ornaments of the chimney. And this evening, though I could not hear the subject of her discourse, or guess the cause of her mirth, I had the first proof that Emma could both laugh and talk; for she continued during the whole evening in half-whispering discourse, accompanied by frequent titter, with a young person of her own age; their hands fast locked in each other, to intimate, I suppose, the inseparability of their affections. And woe to the unlucky wight who attempted to be thirds in the discourse! I addressed them sometimes, and so did others—but an immediate cessation of their discourse, a monosyllable reply to our address, and a look exchanged between them, sufficiently intimated that we might spare ourselves the trouble. Certainly, had I been asked that night if the Miss B.'s were agreeable girls, my veracity or my friendship must have conceded in the reply.

The time did come, nevertheless, when I was allowed to hear these young ladies converse: but though to all appearance they spoke the vulgar tongue, the subject of their discourse was not much more intelligible than if it had been the vernacular language of Kamschatka or Peru. Neither persons nor things had the names by which I had been accustomed to hear them called: and then there was so profuse an admixture of "bywords," "family sayings," and "standing jokes," one needed to be provided with a glossary

as long as the list of French idioms with which a modern traveller sets out on his first visit to Paris. That all this was very amusing, and very innocently so, to themselves, I make no doubt—but I had been accustomed to suppose that when we speak at table, or in company with others, good-breeding requires we should converse in some known tongue, that all may, if they please, take part in the conversation. So sure was I, however, of the talents and good sense of the ladies, I did not doubt their conversation would be very edifying, if ever I could gain a share of it, and I resolved to abide in patience some opportunities of addressing them in my own way. In pursuance of this resolve, I watched every occasion to draw them into conversation. Walking with Miss Julia, I gathered a flower and made some remarks upon its properties; she knew nothing about flowers, and thought it a useless pursuit. I ventured to observe that since the Almighty had condescended to create them, it might possibly not be beneath His creatures to take notice of them. Thinking these subjects might be too light for the lady's wisdom, I next attempted something deeper—but her modesty here came in aid of her taciturnity; and she said the subject was too deep for her understanding: and so the conversation ended. Sitting with Miss Emma, I asked if she had finished any drawings lately. She answered that she had done several, but did not know where any of them were; a plain intimation that she drew for her own pleasure, not for mine. When assembled in the family circle, my attempts were equally fruitless: the young ladies never happened to hear what was passing in their presence. Julia seldom answered till she had been addressed three times; and Emma generally chimed in to the middle of somebody's speech, with remarks quite foreign to the subject—setting all right in the end by confessing they were thinking of something else—a compliment of which they were very prodigal in all companies. As these ladies were Christians, I would not suppose them to be more than usually selfish—nor in their dispositions were they; but in defiance of what is usually supposed to be a requisite of good breeding, they

were invariably fond of talking of their own affairs. It has been said that, to be agreeable in conversation, we should never speak of ourselves : the Miss B.'s had no such maxim ; however abstract might be the subject where it began, it always ended in, "*I saw*," "*I said*," "*I did*—*my friends*—*my house*—*my studies*—*my family*—*my prospects*." I had not long been acquainted with them, before I perceived that particular attention had been paid to the pronunciation of their words, and as their education had been something classical, it cannot be disputed that they were most technically correct. There are those who think it more elegant, because more polite, to talk the language of the society in which we live, and allow words to keep the sound custom has assigned them—however this be, they had an invariable habit of repeating immediately, by accident of course, every word they supposed to be mispronounced by another : I never found an opportunity of telling them that I knew those who would spoil any speech they happen to be making, rather than repeat, in a different manner, a word they suppose to be mispronounced by another. I might not have observed upon this extraordinary accuracy, had it not been to contrast it with an inaccuracy of a very remarkable kind—for though so particular about the sound of words, these ladies evinced a marvellous disregard of their meaning. At the breakfast table we had tea *excruciatingly* hot, poured out of a *lovely* teapot, and accompanied by bread and butter of *infinite* excellence. In our walks—when the *vile* weather did not prevent walking—we saw the *sweetest* ships that ever sailed the waters, the most *exquisite* cows that ever ate grass ; and returning *agonised* with cold, we not seldom found a *heavenly* fire, by which we sat down *enraptured*, comfortably bewailing the *cruel* shortness of the days, and the *eternal* length of the nights ; particularly when we had an *immeasurable* quantity of chestnuts to roast, of which the ladies declared themselves to be *devotedly fond*.

My ears were not the only senses doomed to be *agonised*, to use the ladies' own word, by their incongruities. As there was no appearance of extraordinary economy in Mrs B.'s

establishment, and I had no reason to suppose a want of means, I could not but be surprised at the ordinary adjustment of the young ladies' habiliments. The evenings I saw them in company, they were indeed expensively dressed—but, on all common occasions, it was difficult to say whether the sempstress or the washerwoman was most wanted: added to which, their clothes, being always too big or too little, were evidently made for somebody else; the outer and the inner garments could seldom agree to keep the same boundary—the buttons would not button, and the ties would not tie—if other people wore things one way, the Miss B.'s wore them in the opposite—not, as I found on inquiry, from affected singularity, but because they did not observe but what other people's were the same. After keeping us waiting half an hour for their presence at the dinner table, they made their appearance in their morning dress, not at all the cleaner for another day's service, excusing themselves that they had not had time to dress. Observing Miss Emma's locks one morning in all the simplicity of native straightness, I ventured to ask if she had been bathing. By no means; but she had been reading so late the night before, she had not time to curl her hair.

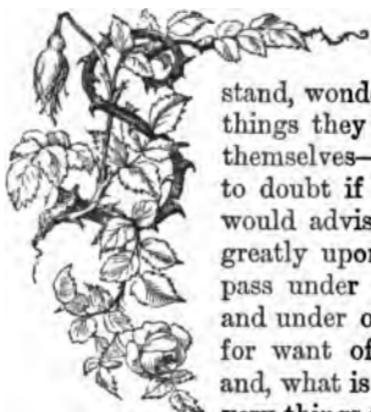
One thing must be acknowledged—if the Miss B.'s never thought it necessary to please in manner, person, or conversation, there was at least so much of fairness in their dealing, that they never thought it necessary to be pleased themselves. I had been in the habit of supposing that civility requires us to seem pleased with whatever is done to please us—and that without dissimulation; for if the thing itself is not acceptable, the motive of kindness that dictates it should be so. Nothing you could shew them met their expectations—nothing you could give them was what they wanted—wherever you went with them, they wished themselves at home. If you talked to them, they yawned—if you played to them, they chattered—if you read to them, they went to sleep. They were sufficiently attentive, at all times, to their own accommodation; some might think they were totally occupied with themselves, to the entire

exclusion of everything else. If their companions would walk, they were tired—if they would sit, they feared to take cold—the grass was wet, and they could not damp their feet—the bushes had thorns, and they should tear their clothes—the stiles were high, and they could not get over—the hills were steep, and they could not get up,—all great inconveniences, as everybody knows—but as they were strong and healthy, I was inclined to wish they would sometimes wet their feet, rend their clothes, and take cold into the bargain, rather than be always consulting their body's welfare, to the impeding of everybody's purpose, and the interruption of everybody's pleasure.—But I fear my readers will be tired of my friends—in truth and so was I.



The Two Inhibitions.

Nothing can less contribute to vigour of action than protracted, anxious fluctuations, intermingled with resolutions decided and revoked: while yet nothing causes a greater expense of feeling. The heart is fretted and exhausted by being subjected to an alternation of contrary excitements, with the mortifying consciousness of their contributing to no end.—FOSTER.



OME of my readers, I understand, wonder I contrive to hear so many things they never happen to have heard themselves—nay, some even go so far as to doubt if I really do hear all I tell. I would advise them, that hearing depends greatly upon listening; for many things pass under our eyes that we do not see, and under our ears that we do not hear, for want of attention and observation; and, what is far more extraordinary, these very things that we hear not and see not, are the things we are ourselves doing, or saying, or thinking, or feeling. If I could prevail on some of my incredulous friends to listen to themselves, to what is whispered in their bosoms, as well as to what finds louder utterance, for one whole year, I should be much surprised, if, at the end of it, they could not tell me some very marvellous stories; and some, perhaps, that, had I told them, they might not have taken to be truth. This preamble I should not have made, as having little to do with the subject of the paper,

had I not been apprehensive that some of my readers will doubt whether I ever heard what I am going to relate.

The three daughters of Lady S. had received something more than a fashionable education; though it must be allowed, a fashionable education in the days of George IV. is nearer to being a good one, than at any time we know of in the annals of the world. I do not mean to speak particularly of her ladyship's character, because my criticisms presume not to reach my elders; except so far as her character may disclose itself in the concerns of her family, and the conversations I was so fortunate as to hear. The outward seeming and circumstances of her condition I may mention, as being that with which the world is, doubtless, well acquainted already. A widow, while her children were yet babies, with more rank than she had fortune to support, this excellent mother had supplied, by most assiduous care, and many ingenious contrivances, the deficiency of income, as it might have affected her daughters' education. Withdrawn from a world that had lost its attraction for her, since the bosom's friend was gone who had been to her all its zest and interest, she had time to form and execute her plans of education, without interruption from other claims; and, whether her plans were good or bad, or both, of which I mean to give no opinion, they were maturely considered, and very consistently executed. She knew her daughters were to move in a genteel, possibly an elevated station in life; and she resolved to omit nothing that could prepare them for it, and fit them to be admired and beloved. She knew they were to pass out of this sublunary sphere of action, into one in which neither the love nor the admiration they had gained in it would avail them any thing; and she resolved to prepare them for this too. The proportionate degree of importance she attached to these separate objects, or whether either had undue preponderance in her measures, remains a secret to me, and may as well remain so to the world; since He who judges from principles rather than actions, who, while he looks closely to the motives of a conduct seemingly fair, judges leniently of the mistakes that

supervene upon the best intentions, has alone to do with the decision.

The Miss S.'s had been taught, as all other ladies are, to do every thing ; and they had been also taught, as all other ladies are not, to understand, reflect, and judge. Unlike those parents, who, by too much constraint, make their children passive machines up to a certain age, and then expect they should know how to move alone, Lady S. had rather guided than constrained their minds—she had accustomed them to deliberate, to reason, and to choose. Whether at their age she did right to let them take their choice when she herself thought it a wrong one, is not my business to determine—I have only to disclose the fact that it was so. If, in relating what I overhear, I should alter things to my own taste, my readers would have cause to complain of my want of veracity ; therefore, whatever may be thought of this, I am not responsible ; and can only say, so runs my story. Nothing had been omitted to give grace and beauty to the minds and persons of these young people—they had been taught to walk and to dance, and to lie down and to sit up, and to dress and to undress ; but not more assiduously had they been tutored in all these things on a Saturday, than they had been taught to read and pray on a Sunday. I do not mean ostentatiously—far from it ; they had been accustomed to spend the Sabbath properly : they had learned all the catechisms that ever were published, and read all the tracts that ever were written ; and, better than this, they had been made intimately acquainted with the sacred language of Scripture, and pains had been taken to make them understand and feel their interest in it. And here, alas ! so captious are our critics, I must again pause to make excuse for my story. I am aware that some will say that dancing and dressing should have been omitted—and others will say the catechisms and tracts should have been omitted—for who ever met with a lady that thought another lady's child had been properly brought up ? I never did. But if any one says the statement is not consistent, I beg their pardon. Every one who knows Lady S.

knows it to be exactly correct ; and those who are not of her ladyship's acquaintance, may find many among their friends, titled and untitled, who are pursuing very much the same plan.

Lady S.'s system of education had, in one respect, differed from that of some fashionable mothers, who think the best preparation for succeeding in the world, is to be kept in total ignorance of it till a certain age ; when the new claimant on its smiles, who has had intercourse only with her governess, her waiting-maid, and possibly, but not certainly, with her parents, comes forth, as at a signal, into the mid-day of its splendours, its allurements, its joys, its difficulties, and its crimes, to understand them if she can, and abide them if she may. What would become of the mazed and dazzled vision, that had for eighteen years been closed in impenetrable darkness, as a preparation for opening at once on the full blaze of a meridian sun ? Lady S. had accustomed her girls to her own society and that of her friends, and without exactly taking them into public, had accustomed them to frequent and free communication with beings, among whom they were to find their future happiness, and perform their future duties. How the three daughters happened to come to maturity at the same time, is, I confess, a difficulty. I do not say they were all of the same age ; yet they could not be very far apart. If I were more used to telling stories, I should not be puzzled by these small difficulties, perhaps. A good novel-writer can have the moon at the full many times in a month ; and what might seem equally difficult to a plain astronomer, can make a full moon rise in the middle of the night. Why then, may I not make the three daughters of Lady S. *come out* at the same time ? It remains only to be further understood, that I, listening, heard the succeeding conversation.

" My girls," said Lady S. to her daughters, as they sat round the tea-table one Sunday evening, " you have reached the age at which I have always promised you an introduction to the world, for which you have been so many years

preparing yourselves. I have given you every advantage befitting your rank, that may enable you to enjoy its pleasures: and such principles as, I trust, may help you to avoid its dangers. I have prepared you for the world, because you must sojourn in it a little time; you must act in it the part assigned to you; society will lay its claim to you; and if I had neglected in your education any of its requirements, the world would have said, and you might sometimes have said yourselves, that your mother had failed of her duty towards you, and suffered her own sorrows to blight the budding of your joys. But I have told you, too, that this world is not your abiding-place, nor its maxims your safest guide, nor its pleasures your best enjoyment. The higher importance of eternal things, the greater claim of Him who made you, on your affections, the better happiness his love prepares for you, are themes you have not now to hear of first. Knowledge of either world, as far as it can be communicated to you by another, you cannot want: the time is come when you are to take upon yourselves the character of women and of Christians on your own behalf, and personally to answer to God and man the claims that each may have on you, for which hitherto I have been in some measure your sponsor. I need scarcely remind you that you have, a fortnight since, after the manner of our church, renewed in confirmation your baptismal vows—you cannot be forgetful what they were; and that you promised by them, not only to believe the Word of God, but to obey it, not only to devote yourselves to his service, but to renounce every thing that may stand in opposition to it, or interfere with it; whether it be the sinful suggestions of your own heart, prompted by the evil spirit to do his own dark works, or the allurements of the world, whose pomp, and fashion, and too vehement desires, you pledged yourselves neither to follow nor to be led by. I trust you are ready to fulfil your vows, and keep your faith with Heaven."

"I hope so, mamma," said Emma: "it was a solemn service; and when I had gone through it, I felt I had pledged myself to do I scarce know what, and certainly have but

little power to perform, except as strength from above is promised to the wish and the endeavour."

"On the other hand, the world you have promised not to follow, awaits you and invites you: you have blessings to seek from it and duties to perform in it—you can neither do without the one, nor are at liberty to evade the other; these opposing duties"—

"But why, dear mother," said Maria, "should they stand opposed? God made the world, and placed us in it; surely, then, we may partake of it without offence to Him? I do not see any difficulties in dividing our attention between our religious duties and the concerns of life, and giving to each"—

"Its due proportion, you would say," interrupted Lady S.; "and, it is true, you must; but not to each an equal share; and as they will too often clash, there must be in every such instance a preference to one above the other—my children surely know to which the preference is due."

"Of course, mamma," said Fanny; "everybody knows that God is to be preferred before the world, and we shall never think of doing otherwise. But I do long to go out, and taste the delights of society: it is so natural at our age to like pleasure, that it cannot possibly be wrong. When one is older it may be different. When are we to begin to go out mamma?"

"That is exactly what I was preparing to tell you—I have two invitations for you this week."

"Two in one week! Oh, that is delightful!" cried Fanny.

"I should have preferred that it had happened otherwise; for, as we are circumstanced, considerable preparation will be necessary for your appearance in public on such occasions, especially as it is the first time," said Lady S.

"But then, dear mamma, it is the more fortunate, because one preparation will do for both," answered Maria.

"Not exactly so, I fear: it rather appears to me that it will be desirable to put off one or the other—but I intend to leave this to your choice. You are invited to a ball on

Friday, at Mrs Askall's, where all that is most distinguished in the country will be assembled together. Though there will be but few girls there whose rank is higher than your own, there will be none, perhaps, whose fortune is less; therefore, to make an appearance equal to others, you must depend on your own industry and contrivance."

"O yes," cried Fanny, "we can make our own dresses, and all that—there will be plenty of time before Friday—I should not mind sitting up all night if—But what a pity we did not begin before! When did you get the invitations?"

"On Saturday—but I had reasons for not communicating it till this evening. Could it be avoided, I had rather not see your time so spent; but you know I cannot afford to purchase dresses for you, such as you will like to appear in, where all will be so gay and brilliant."

"Certainly," said Maria, "I should like to look like other people. I shall lie awake to-night thinking how we can contrive the prettiest dresses at the smallest cost. It will not signify about the time they take; for once we can put off our other employments just for a single week. One, two, three, four days, besides great part of Friday—for it will do if they are done by the time we want to dress; but"—

"But, mamma, you have forgotten the other invitation," said Emma.

"The other, my love, was received this morning; you heard it as well as myself, and cannot, I am sure, have forgotten it. You know that it is not usual for young persons in the Established Church to take the Sacrament till they have been confirmed; but after that ceremony has been attended to, I should be sorry that there were reason longer to delay it, as I believe I have mentioned to you before: and the invitation was given this morning to all that are religiously and devoutly disposed."

"Well, but, mamma, what has that to do with Mrs Askall's ball?" said Fanny.

"No more, my dear, than that I do not see how you can attend to both."

"I cannot see that at all—the Sacrament is on Sunday, not on Friday, and"—

"Stay, my child ; recollect the nature of the invitation before you decide on this matter. The feast you are invited to is at the table of the Lord. It is a joyful feast, indeed, for it is the commemoration of his love, and to us the sweet pledge and foretaste of eternal bliss : but it is also a serious one, setting forth, in lively emblems, a tale of agony and death that must ever fill our eyes with tears, and tinge our cheeks with shame. It is with good reason, therefore, that we are exhorted, ere we present ourselves at the feast, to consider the dignity of the ceremony, and examine deeply the state of our own hearts, that we may make such appearance there as may become the occasion. If you think a whole week's preparation scarcely enough to do honour to the invitation of an earthly friend, can you present yourselves before your heavenly benefactor, the Maker of heaven and earth, without any previous means bestowed, or time expended to make ready for his presence ? The dress is different, indeed, as is the occasion ; one is the outside trickery, of no importance in itself, for with it you are no other than without it, attended to in conformity to the *convenances* of society, by custom only rendered suitable or unsuitable to the occasion. The other—how shall I speak meetly of its importance ? You cannot, indeed, make yourselves fit to appear—no pains of yours can veil your unworthiness, or lessen it ; nor any preparation be, as some mistake it, a ticket of admittance that gives you a right to come and claim the benefits of this holy feast. You come by invitation free and unmerited ; but there is a requisition plain and positive from him who sends it, as to the manner of your appearing. The form of invitation used by our Church is the language of Scripture, and those who do not use the same words, give it the same meaning. We are bidden to examine not only the state of our hearts at the present moment, but the records of our past lives ; that where we have been wrong, we may confess the wrong, lament it deeply, and determine to amend it, as far as may

be, for the future: and it is not only the act but the thought, and word, and deed, we are to examine. Nay, there may be something even to be done as well as determined—for we are expressly forbidden to approach with malice or envy in our hearts, or unforgiven wrong rankling in our bosoms, or injury on our heads, for which we are inclined to make no reparation. Scripture is very express in this—for even when we arrive at the altar, if we recollect anything of wrong between us and our fellow-creatures, we are bidden to go away, and make no offering till we are in better mind. The reason of all this is very plain. We come to the feast as sinners, unworthy to gather up a crumb that falls from it, and seeking for our unworthiness an unconditional pardon. Ill would it become us to bring in our bosoms, envy, and jealousy, and resentment; the birth of pride, the workings of a mind that holds itself at higher price than others have had respect to. Ill, very ill, would it beseem us to bring with us a reckoning of the unpaid dues we are determined on exacting from each other. We come to a banquet of love—love immutable, immeasurable, such as heaven wonders at, and earth can never comprehend. Ill-dressed guests, indeed, we must appear, if love be not the absorbing feeling of our souls, to the suspension, at least, of every other sentiment. And then we come for a purpose—we come for remission and a cure, as well as to make acknowledgment of deepest gratitude to Him, through whose death and passion we alone can receive them. How can this be, if we have taken no account beforehand of our debts or their amount; or if we have known nothing of the symptoms of the disease we come to be relieved of, nor have given ourselves the trouble to inquire how far we really need or desire any of these things? Our enjoyment at the feast will be proportioned to our sense of the benefit—our sense of the benefit will be proportioned to our sense of need—and our gratitude to both—and what can we know of this without examination of our hearts and lives? This preparation is called by our Church the marriage garment, and with reason, for the resemblance

holds: the garment was not a cause of the invitation, nor an inducement to receive the guest, nor a title to sit down at another's table, nor a payment made for the entertainment there—yet was it that without which none could be welcomed at a marriage feast. And now, my children, you must decide for yourselves, whether you can, without preparation, accept this invitation for the first time in your lives."

"I think we cannot," replied Fanny; "and as we shall certainly not have time to think of it properly, it will be better to put it off: for the ball, you know, cannot be put off, and Mrs Askall gives but one in the year—it is a long promise that we should be there, and she is of so much consequence in the neighbourhood, it would not do to offend her; besides, we shall have so much pleasure; everybody will be there, and it will be such an odd reason to give! The Sacrament will be repeated in a month or two, and then, perhaps, we shall have nothing to prevent our receiving it seriously, and as we ought."

"You are left to your own choice, Fanny; but be mindful of your profession and your vow. You are preferring what you esteem pleasure to what you know to be a duty—you are setting the opinions of men before the express command of God—you are offering to your heavenly Father an excuse that will not be accepted by an earthly friend. I fear that preference you were so sure just now would incline to the right side has already fallen on the wrong. But what says my Maria?"

"I am thinking very seriously what is to be done," answered Maria; "I should be very sorry to neglect the Sacrament, which I anticipated with desire, besides the sense of duty. But indeed, mamma, I do not see why it cannot be managed. We shall be busy, to be sure, till Friday—but while our fingers are employed for one purpose, our thoughts may be upon the other: and then, you know, there will be a day on Saturday that we can quite give our minds to serious thought. I should not like to give up either, if you leave it to my choice."

"You may try it, Maria—for I believe you sufficiently

conscientious, when the Sunday comes, to give up your purpose, if you find your mind unfit. And Emma?"

"I cannot go to the ball, mamma—it is not possible."

"And why not, Emma?"

"Because while you were speaking to me, my mind took a hasty glance upon itself; and I saw within it so much to think of, so much to reflect upon: and I felt so much need of the medicine, and so long a debt to reckon up, and so great a desire to receive the offered pledge of my Redeemer's love; and, after sixteen years of kindness and favour lavished on me, to make my first public acknowledgment at his table—I cannot, mamma, do anything that will prevent this invitation, or unfit me for accepting it."

"You have your choice, my children," answered Lady S., "with liberty to change it, if you see occasion."

We left our story on the Sunday evening: I would persuade myself it is not there we should resume it. I would rather believe, and so I am sure would my readers, that I was mistaken, when, after a sermon had been read, and family prayers had been offered, and the ladies had withdrawn to their chambers, I heard through the walls that parted us, certain words which might be construed into a commencement of the week's preparation—such, for instance, as blond, and chenille, and gimp, and piping—all very innocent things in themselves; and if my imagination connected them with anything not quite appropriate to the time and circumstance, my readers will say the fault is mine; that I have no right to suppose, still less to relate, anything more than I did really hear. I would not, on any account, be thought censorious; therefore I will leave it as a thing of course, that while the evening sermon was read, the invitations came not into the minds of the young ladies, and that while prayers were offered, no thought of dresses occurred: and that before they went to sleep they did not speak, and after they went to sleep they did not dream, of anything connected with the subject. In which very probable case, the Misses S. stand acquitted of having commenced their preparations before Monday morning. I am quite certain they rose that

morning at daybreak : and as getting up early, whether to do anything or nothing, is an established proof of industry and activity, I beg I may not be understood to object to that circumstance.

As my curiosity had been considerably excited by the conversation of the evening, I felt some regret that I could hear nothing during these early hours, but the opening and shutting of drawers, the overturning of bandboxes, and certain other indistinct sounds to which I could not attach any meaning. The breakfast table relieved my mind of this regret.

“ Mamma,” said Fanny, the moment she appeared, “ we have been so busy trying on all the gowns we have, to find which pattern will fit us best ; and then we could not determine upon the colour—we have been trying all colours to see which becomes us, and I think I look best in blue, and Maria is positive she looks best in pink, and so we almost quarrelled about it ; for you know we must be dressed alike. At last, when we found it was impossible to agree, and we were only wasting time, we determined to refer it to you to choose for us.”

This at least proved a wise measure, and before the whole hour of breakfast had elapsed, the decision was made—as the young ladies were decidedly amiable, of course the lady of the rejected colour shewed no signs of vexation. And now the plot thickened fast, for the *mercer* came, and his bale of goods came, and the *yardwand* came, and there was measuring of breadths, and measuring of lengths, and many very intricate calculations besides, to make the least possible quantity do the greatest possible service. In the issue, it appeared to me that the materials selected were simple, tasteful, and very little expensive.

It would be quite superfluous to describe the whole process of dressmaking—every lady who has made her *entrée* into the gay world without a long purse at her command knows what ensues upon wanting a ball-dress in a hurry, and can picture to herself the state of the apartment during the first stage of the proceeding—the various articles of ap-

parel consigned to the backs of chairs—the piano converted into a measuring board—the attendance of all the females in the house, except the cook, with thimbles on their middle finger—the trying on, and cutting out, and fitting in. It was impossible not to admire the skill and ingenuity of the young ladies. I should have felt much interest in the scene, and made many a wise reflection on the beauty of domestic usefulness and feminine industry ; and, for anything I know, might have written an essay on the advantages of ladies being early taught to help themselves in these indispensables of life, could I have forgotten, as early as they had done, the conversation of the preceding evening : but lest it should ever seem that I neglect to commend what is in itself commendable, I beg my friends to remember that I was marking the progress of this week with reference to its destined determination, and with the TWO INVITATIONS ever on my mind.

Dresses, as Miss Maria had previously observed, are made with hands—but excepting the housemaid, who did, or meant to do, only what she was bidden, and always had that to undo, because, as she said, she was thinking of something else, more probably because she was not thinking at all, the thoughts and tongues of the industrious group were fully employed during this first day. And much I heard of the comparative merits of full fronts and plain fronts, and high backs and low backs, and circles and squares, and vandykes and scallops, and straightways, and crossways, and longways. It came once into my head to wonder if, in the days of Grecian elegance and classic taste, there were so many *ways* of making a gown. Time, with its usual malevolence, sped the quicker for the need there was of it—night came, and the ladies stole some hour or two upon its wintry length, and rose but the earlier to renew their labours ; and like to the first day was the second.

“ I am very glad,” said Maria, as they sat something more quietly at the work-table on the evening of Tuesday—“ I am very glad the bustle of choosing and planning our dresses is over : now, though we must work hard to get the trimming

done, we have nothing more to contrive, therefore need not talk or think about our work; I really shall be glad to give my mind to better thoughts."

"I do not know what you can do, Maria," replied Fanny; "but I never can attend to two things at once. Any very serious subject would be so totally out of harmony with my present thoughts and desires, which are all engrossed with the care of my personal appearance, and the anticipation of pleasure, it would seem almost a profanation to introduce any such. Solomon says there is a time for all things—but he does not say we can do all things at the same time—therefore, till this week is over, I can give my mind to nothing but this ball."

"If we were doing wrong," replied Maria, "I should think with you; but we are employed as propriety and circumstances require, and certainly in a very innocent occupation. The last two days it has been indeed impossible to attend to anything else; but to-morrow I shall try to complete my task without so much talking and thinking about it—and perhaps I can get Emma to read to me."

Emma had firmly held her purpose; but let it not be supposed that she had withdrawn herself to a cloister, or a hermit's cell, or even to her own chamber, during all this time. Sincerity is seldom ostentatious, and firmness is seldom boastful. Emma seemed to be going on with her ordinary occupations; she gave her opinion simply when asked it, and cheerfully offered occasional assistance to her sisters; but her mind was evidently otherwise engaged; she shared not the interest of the scene. It cannot be denied that she was less gay than they, and felt a frequent wish that she could share their pleasurable excitement without the sacrifice of what she esteemed her duty.

"It is surely absurd in you," said Fanny to her, one day, "to give up this ball on purpose to make yourself singular. It will have a very odd appearance in the eyes of the world. I cannot think it right in one so young to make such a public display of religion by acting differently from the rest of her family. Singularity always wears the appearance of

pride: to say nothing of the pleasure you needlessly throw away."

"It cannot be making any display at all," answered Emma; "for, as I am the youngest, it will naturally be supposed I do not yet go out; and in respect to singularity, mamma gave us our separate choice, and, I think, was by no means dissatisfied with mine. Then for the pleasure, dear Fanny, I confess I should like it, if I could share it; but never in my life could I find pleasure in anything while my heart was heavy, and my conscience ill at ease. If I felt as you do, I would go; but feeling as I do, I should be miserable when I got there. You may be right in your determination, pursuing innocently a natural and unforbidden pleasure, while I am but indulging a needless scruple. I do not pretend to decide upon that point, or to be wiser than you. But of this I am certain—if wrong in my judgment I am right in my conduct. I cannot be doing wrong in foregoing a pleasure that seems to me to interfere with my religious duties, and unfit me for the sacred ceremony in which I desire to participate. If my maturer judgment should discover it to have been a needless sacrifice, the memory of it will at least not lie heavy on my bosom, when it would probably have weight enough without it. I may sometimes smile at it as a childish weakness. But I shall never have to blush at it as a sin. The veriest fool that follows the will of God, as far as his weakness can discover it, will gather the reward of wisdom; while the wiser one who pursues his own will reap but the meed of folly."

Maria had hitherto said very little upon the subject, yet there was an air that seemed to say I am wiser than either of you. The temptation of giving words to her wisdom now became too great to be understood. "Nobody," she said, "can think it right to pursue their own will in opposition to the will of God; but it is the part of discretion and good sense to distinguish between a right principle and a needless singularity. We have been very religiously brought up, and accustomed to attend to all our duties: I therefore do not see why we should be so very ill-prepared for receiving

the Sacrament, even if we have not time to think of it particularly this week ; but, for my part, I shall find time. There is no harm in dancing, and there is no harm in dressing, and there is no harm in mixing with other people for a few hours' recreation : if we make a sin of what in itself is not so, the fault must be our own. I can be just as religious in a ball-room as in my own chamber, if I please. God has nowhere bidden us to withdraw from the ordinary occupations of life, and become nuns and hermits, that we may be more meet to serve him. We should rather learn to resist temptation in the world, than fly from it. I do not mean to suppose those who act thus conscientiously are absolutely wrong ; but it is to be regretted that good people have not better judgment, but must be running into extremes. I should not exactly say that Emma does wrong ; but I think it would be more proof of sense to do as other people do, at least till she is older."

"Indeed," answered Emma, "I had rather act than talk about it ; and I would rather prove my want of sense by acting against the opinions of the world, than my want of principle by acting against my own conscience. I am not sure enough to like to argue : but I am sure enough to know what to do. There is a world that, in my baptism, I have promised neither to follow nor be led by. Now, I do not know what that can be unless it be the doing what others do, when in my conscience I feel and believe I should do otherwise."

"Well, well," said Maria, "I do not wish to persuade you. If we all do what we think right, we shall all do well, because nothing more is required of us. If I thought as you do, I would act as you do ; for I am as much determined as yourself to go to the Sacrament on Sunday ; and I dare-say, when Sunday comes, I, who have been innocently enjoying myself, shall be just as fit as you, who have condemned yourself to a week of thoughtfulness and self-denial. We shall see.—Will you read to me something serious while I work the silver into this bit of gauze ? It does not need any thought, and I am quite at liberty to listen."

"That I will do with pleasure," said Emma; and the conversation was for that time superseded by the reading of Hawes's "Communicant's Companion." I cannot be very exact in the chronology, but I think this conversation passed some time in the Wednesday evening. Meanwhile the preparation advanced rapidly. Fanny's spirits grew lighter as the day approached—all her walk became dance, and all her speech became song, so light seemed her heart and so gay. It appeared to me that Maria's was not so. She frequently kept silence while Emma read, and seemed to listen attentively; but it had rather the appearance of depressing than of soothing her spirits. She grew pettish, found fault with her thread, broke her needle, wished she could afford to buy her dresses, complained of the misery of being born without fortune, said the ribbons did not match, and the gloves did not fit. One moment Fanny's high spirits fatigued her—it was quite silly in her to be so elated about a foolish ball; the next moment Emma's gloomy silence depressed her—why did she spoil everybody's pleasure? there was no amusement in going and leaving her at home.

"To-morrow night at this time!" cried Fanny, as she danced gaily round the room. "I wonder whom I shall dance with first. I won't dance at all unless I get a good partner—it makes one look so foolish. I should like to know how the Miss Dashoffs will be dressed—they are such pert silly girls; it would be provoking to appear in worse style than they do."

"Oh, as to that," answered Maria, "I am not at all anxious. I should be very sorry to be jealous of anybody. I am sure I do not go to the ball to shew myself, but merely for the pleasure of dancing. Indeed I shall be quite glad when it is over, that I may return to more rational pursuits. One must do as other people do, but really it is a great sacrifice of time. I would much rather stay at home."

"Then why, dear Maria, do you not stay at home? I am quite sure mamma would be content to hear such a determination, and would not press your going even now," said Emma.

"Or, rather," exclaimed Fanny, "why do you try to sit on two stools at once to the manifest danger of going to the ground between them? Whether it will be more rational to go or to stay at home I really have no time to consider; but I am sure it must be right to do one or the other; and you do not seem in the humour for either. I think it is quite wicked to be reading and talking of sacred things, as you and Emma have been doing all this day, in the midst of such occupations. It has served no purpose but to put you out of humour with yourself, and make you disagreeable to everybody. It would be much better to give yourself up to pleasure this week, and put off those subjects till a more proper season. There's a time for all things. Come, let me just put these wreaths round your hair, to see which looks best. Oh, how sweetly!—I wish to-morrow were come."

Maria rose and went to the glass. "Well, but, Fanny, I cannot wear this; it does not become me. I wish you would let me"—

"Well, but, Maria, that does not signify, as you do not go to shew yourself, you know; and"—

I am sorry that, having forgotten to observe the time-piece, I cannot inform my readers how long it took the ladies to settle the difference of opinion respecting these same ornaments—but I daresay the vender knows how long he stood in the cold hall waiting the restoration of his goods.

The date of the first invitation had now arrived. When the dressing began, I am at some loss to decide—I might allege arguments to prove it commenced over night—or probably there might be a sort of rehearsal—it is impossible to know exactly what one only hears through a wall. It does not signify, for certainly the ladies were *not* dressed in the morning. The time came, however, that they were dressed, and, as I believed, extremely well; and if the flush of pleasure on the cheek, and the sparkling of expectation in the eye, be proofs of happiness, I never looked upon a happier pair.

“Does my Emma repent her choice?” said Lady S. to the youngest girl, as she sat in her plain morning dress before the fire, between her gay and happy sisters ; one hand drooping, the half-closed book upon her knee, the other hand pressed upon her lips, in the attitude of one who is not quite so happy as she meant to be.

“I am not sure, mamma, whether I do or not—I shall be glad when you come back.”

“Well, never mind, dear,” said the good-natured Fanny, “you will be wiser another time. I wish the carriage would come. The Miss Dashoffs will go in their own carriage, of course—I suppose almost every one will have their own carriage but ourselves. That is not particularly pleasant, I must confess—but it will be dark, and perhaps no one will observe what we come in.”

“And it does not signify if they do,” replied Maria ; “I should be ashamed to feel any of that sort of pride. We are of higher birth than they are, though not so rich.”

“And, pray, dear Maria,” said Lady S., “what may be the difference between the pride that is mortified at being poorer, and the pride that is gratified at being greater than others ?”

“Pride is a sin, I know,” answered Maria, “however excited, and by whatever fed—and yet it does not exactly seem to me the same thing. If I should blush at being seen in a hack carriage, where other girls are in their own, it must be an emotion of mortified pride, and therefore is sinful emotion—whereas, if I should feel pleasure in hearing you announced as My Lady, while their mothers are introduced as plain Mistress, it would be”—

“An emotion of gratified pride ; and, therefore, as sinful as the other, because the offspring of the self-same passion.”

“But, mamma, it is impossible to keep off all such thoughts from our minds, when we come into competition with other people, on occasions in which every one is valued according to their exterior advantages.”

“And therefore it is that such occasions are unfavourable

to that subjugation of sinful passion which is the Christian's aim. But I hear the carriage."

A look of thoughtfulness passed over Maria's brow, as if she recollected something—but the desired moment had arrived, and they all stepped into the hired carriage. I thought Fanny looked at it with more than common observance, but this might be fancy.

I now find myself under very considerable difficulty. Most story-tellers know what passes in their absence, and can relate, without either seeing or hearing, even to the most secret thoughts and feelings of their characters; I am prohibited from telling anything but what I hear. What is to be done? The carriage drove off—and I remained at home—how, then, could I hear what followed?

The hired carriage had driven off, the large hall door had been closed by the housemaid, for the footman of course was gone—the same inelegant substitute brought up two solitary-looking tea-cups, in company with the undress tea-pot, and a kettle of water, that, in a universal hubbub, had neglected to boil itself; and in silent thoughtfulness, Miss Emma and myself sat down to what is commonly called an uncomfortable tea. What she was thinking of I cannot determine—my thoughts had gone to Mrs Askall's by a nearer road, and saw the carriage stop at the door; after much contention of wheels, horses, and coachmen, whose sense of proprietorship made them dispute precedence with the hack. I saw the ladies ascend the stairs into the large uncarpeted room, of which the present coldness was only made tolerable by anticipation of future warmth. I saw—what they who are familiar with it need not be told; and they who are not will not perceive the merit of my description.

Meantime the tea hour had passed, and we prepared to amuse ourselves; I took my drawing, and Emma proposed to read to me. The book proved interesting, and gave rise to much animated conversation, in which the carriages, and their contents, and the ball-room into which they had been emptied, were alike forgotten. Emma grew gay and play-

ful, the hours passed quickly, and when she took leave of me for the night there was upon her countenance a look of such serene enjoyment as bespoke a spirit satisfied and a mind at peace.

I had a task to perform, and therefore sat out the lingering hours of night, till, far upon the advance of morning, the revellers returned. The first question, of course, was respecting the pleasantness of the *fête*; to which exclamations of delight were the quick response—more there was not need to ask; all were in too much hurry to give the answers, to pay any regard to the questions. As they all talked at once, it would be impossible to repeat the conversation; but on most points of discussion I perceived considerable difference of opinion. Maria, who had by far the most attractive person, thought the gentlemen extremely polite and attentive—Fanny denounced them all as bears and boobies. Fanny wondered the Miss Dashoffs should be so much admired when they were decidedly plain—Maria was satisfied that they were not admired, but courted only because they were rich. Maria thought it quite impertinent in the Miss Somebodies to be more plainly dressed than others, when they were known to be rich—Fanny thought it equally impertinent in the Miss Nobodies to be better dressed than others, when they were known to be poor. Fanny complained of the rudeness of some one in attempting to stand above her in the dance—Maria complained that some one else had complained of her rudeness in attempting to stand above them, and both were resolved to retaliate another time. Fanny was vexed because she did not dance with the person she wished to dance with—and Maria was vexed because, when she had danced with the persons she wished to dance with, they thought proper to dance with somebody else that she desired they should not dance with.

On the whole, as far as by listening I could learn, everybody had done something they had better not have done, or worn something they would have been better without, or said something not quite within the pale of good-breed-

ing and good sense. But these were specks upon the evening's brightness—the gratifications were exquisite, and the pleasures out of number. Fanny never was so happy in her life as when Mr C. left Miss Dashoff to sit with her; though, but to tease Miss D., she would rather have been rid of him. Maria was enchanted to hear Lady W. say the Miss S.'s were the best dressed girls in the room, and wonder whom they employed. Both ladies were delighted they had chosen to wear pink, when they saw the vulgar Miss Thomsons were in blue. In short, time would fail to tell out the list of pleasures; and declaring they never were so happy or so tired in their lives, to which last assertion their pallid cheeks and rayless eyes sufficiently subscribed, the young ladies retired to their room. I listened, for now the deeper secrets of the *féte* were to be disclosed—it was here that, restraint thrown off, the compliments were all repeated, the excited passions all exposed, the jealousies and mortifications confessed, the triumphs acted over again, and the satire repeated with redoubled zest; but far be it from me to betray the truths disclosed, and the secrets laid open, in the careless confidence of private converse and sisterly trust. If any one of my readers has been a partner in any conversation carried on under similar circumstances, she has but to recall it to be perfectly in the secret of this.

The breakfast stood long in patient order on the table the ensuing morning. The sun was mid-way in his short wintry course before the slumberers awakened, or, I should rather say, arose—for wake they surely did not. These young people had not yet been long enough practised in the hard service of dissipation to feel no morning consequence of the night's exertion; and they came forth at length with looks as well as words of weariness, languor, and exhaustion; experiencing, though they probably neither understood the feeling nor made the reflection, that, as there are more ways than one of being intoxicated, so there are others besides the wine-drinker, who are doomed to experience all the misery of getting sober. During the remainder of the morning, of

which the remainder was not much, they dozed upon the chair, or lounged upon the sofa, the discussion of the night being occasionally renewed ; but neither the pleasures nor the pains, nor the flattery nor the neglects, were so fully appreciated as they had been—distance and the mists of lassitude had something lessened the distinctness of these receding objects. After dinner, Fanny gave herself up freely to the weariness she felt—Maria kept up an ineffectual struggle to read a book that seemed equally determined not to be read, if I might judge from the propensity it shewed to close itself in her hands. Whether thinking, dreaming, or reading, however, the mind's occupation was one and the same, as was clearly proved by the occasional remarks that came from the lips of each, evincing that the intermediate aberrations of the mind had extended no farther than from coaches to complexions, from bracelets to quadrille tunes.

In the evening Lady S. requested some conversation with her daughters respecting their intentions for the morrow ; observing that as, in conformity with her intention declared on the preceding Sabbath, she had neither spoken to them on the subject, nor interfered with their wishes during the week, so it now became necessary to renew the question ; the second invitation yet remaining to be attended to, and the hour being near at hand : she desired to know which of her daughters intended to accompany her to the altar on the following morning.

The young people had too much right feeling to make any attempt to avert the subject, or shew unwillingness towards it : but there was something in their looks and manner that plainly said the subject was ill-timed—that would have asked, if it might be, a more convenient season. But this could not be—Lady S. was patiently looking towards Fanny, as the eldest, for reply. Fanny rubbed her eyes, and stretched her limbs, and seemed to be looking about for the senses that were not immediately forthcoming : at length she said—

“ I have never had but one intention, mamma ; it is that

I declared at first, and I have seen little cause to change it. I knew that whatever occupies my mind strongly, engrosses it fully. I knew very well, that besides being so much occupied with the actual employments of the week, my spirits would be too much elated for anything like serious reflection—in short, that the thing would be too much in my head to admit of graver matters; and I knew equally well, that when the ball was over, I should be tired and asleep as I am now; and that the same images would remain on my imagination, though receding now, as they were before advancing. And if I thought this at first, I am now but the more convinced of it—I have not had a thought of anything but pleasure the whole week; except to feel impatient at Maria's interruption of our occupations with subjects that, at another time, I should have liked as well as herself. And now that all is over, there needs no examination to teach me that I am not prepared for receiving the Sacrament. I have not felt a feeling, nor thought a thought, nor spoken a word to-day, but those of vanity, rivalship, and folly. I am not so insensible of the sacredness of heavenly things as to intrude myself on a rite so holy in such a dress as this: and besides that I do not feel ready, I have no inclination to it—it is not in unison with my present feeling—I am not in the humour—I never can presume to offer to God heartless and unwilling service. But you know, mamma, I never meant to go to the Sacrament to-morrow. I shall wait another opportunity."

"Do you know that you shall have one, Fanny?"

"Yes—that is—no, mamma, I do not exactly know it. But I may fairly presume so—I have no reason to think otherwise—in all probability—I am young and well."

"I will not make trite remarks upon the uncertainty of life and the deceptiveness of health, Fanny: we all know it, and we none of us believe it; and when any one dies before they expect—and who, with some few exceptions, does not die before they expect?—there is as much surprise as if it had never happened before. But, my child, allowing it prob-

able, would you stake your eternal welfare on a probability?"

"Nay, but, mamma, you have always taught me that my salvation does not, cannot depend upon an outward ceremony ; my taking the Sacrament can no more make me fit to die than my not taking it can exclude me from the realms of bliss."

"That is true, my love—and you are neither the more nor the less prepared to die for having partaken of the Lord's Supper. It is not, as some suppose, the makeweight of our insufficient merit, nor the sponge that wipes out the record of our sins. But what, then, is it? If not the preparation for the feasts of heaven, it is the emblem, the earnest, the beginning of them ; you come to the one to profess yourself an aspirant to the other ; the same claim that is pleaded here must be pleaded there ; the same emblem of the marriage garment has been used for both, and the thing which it pictures is in both the same. If you are not fitted for the one, you are not fitted for the other—if you have put it out of your power conscientiously to present yourself at the Lord's table upon earth, could you expect admittance to his presence above?—if this his invitation be refused, how could you receive the messenger that should bid you to his marriage feast in heaven?—'I pray thee have me excused ; I have been engaged in other matters.' The plea has served you now ; you are excused : you were free to choose whether you would accept his gracious bidding ; you have chosen, and it seems that all is well. You have deliberately unfitted yourself for serious thought, and, by your own confession, made yourself at once incapable and indisposed to the commemoration of his love, and the participation of his blessings : and, in this state of conscious unfitness, you mean to go to rest to-night ; and you will lie down to sleep in peace and confidence, as if nothing were the matter. But, my child, there is a feast in heaven prepared for them that love Him —what if the messenger be sped to-night to say that all is ready, and your hour of admission or rejection is at hand—that the decisive moment is arrived for you, which must

determine your doom through all eternity ! 'I have been engaged in other matters'—will the plea serve you then ? Yes, then, as now, you will be excused, indeed—but the door will be closed and made fast for ever, and she who was not ready must remain without. Is it not so, Fanny ?'

"Undoubtedly, mamma, it is ; and I should hold myself unfit indeed to die to-night : I can scarcely suppose myself prepared to appear before the throne of God in heaven when I cannot venture to present myself at His table upon earth."

"Then did I say amiss, Fanny, when I said you were willing to stake your eternal welfare on a probability—a probability as far as you can see, or know, or calculate ? With God there are no probabilities, because there are no uncertainties ; but in human language, and in earthly seeming, you say it is not probable you shall die to-night ; and with this you can content yourself—and on this you can go happily to rest—and with this you will wake cheerfully to-morrow, and the next day and the next you will remain the same, perhaps—deferring, postponing, putting aside the invitations, the commands of him to whom you have professed to devote yourself, for the sake of those things you promised in your baptism to renounce. Whether you go to the Sacrament to-morrow or not, is, indeed, of no consequence to your salvation. It is not because you do not receive it, that you are unprepared to die—it is because you are unprepared to receive it, unfit to receive it, indisposed to receive it. Consider seriously how long it is wise to remain so, in a state of being where the youngest and the strongest is as the brief herbage of the field, that grows up to-day, and to-morrow is cut down and withered.—And what does Maria intend ?"

Maria hesitated—her tone of confidence was something lowered, and her wisdom seemed not quite so eager to express itself as it had been ; yet still she kept her purpose, and said she saw no reason for declining to accompany Lady S. to the Sacrament on the morrow, if she herself saw none.

"What I see is a small matter, dear Maria—but do you feel none?"

Maria again hesitated and stammered, but still said, "No."

Lady S. seemed surprised, and for a moment embarrassed, as if not knowing how to reply to an answer she had not expected: she then said—"Have you examined your own heart, Maria, after the manner enjoined you, to see if there be reason or not?"

"I cannot pretend," answered Maria, "that I have made any special examination, or any particular preparation for this holy ceremony—I meant it, but I have not had time: I was not aware that I should be too much elated yesterday, and too much exhausted to-day, to apply my mind to anything; but, after all, there is something very pharisaical in the idea of preparing ourselves, as if the formality of a week's preparation, as it is called, a few prayers and a little reading, could be of any value in the sight of God, or by any means recommend us to his favour. We ought always to be prepared; and therefore I conclude I am so without"—

"You have come to the conclusion by a short road, Maria; but our Church, which only echoes the language of Scripture, has ventured to make a doubt of this, and sends neither invitation, nor permission, nor a welcome to any one who, without examination, takes this for granted. But since you are so confident of your own state, I must suppose you have some grounds for being so. To use the language of our Catechism, (not because I would rest on the authority of man, but because I know none better or more simply scriptural,) I would ask you first, whether you do truly repent you of your former sins?"

"Of course I do."

"But have you inquired of yourself what they are?"

"Not particularly. I know I must have sinned frequently, and of course am sorry to have done so."

"To be sorry is to feel pain—to repent is to be grieved, ashamed, distressed. Can you have felt this without know-

ing for what? And another part of repentance is, that you determine to lead a new life. Have you made any such determination?"

"I do not know, mamma, in what I am to amend."

"And how can you know, my child, if you have not inquired? And if you can perceive nothing in which you can amend, how can you repent of anything? It is sufficiently plain that these are but empty words to you. Yet these things you will profess when you approach the table! The next requisition is that you have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His death. A lively faith, to take no more than the common meaning of the word, must be an active, animated, conscious thing, something that gives signs of life. It cannot be a vague belief laid up in the bosom so closely that even to yourself it makes no difference of sensation whether it be there or not. A thankful remembrance of Christ's death cannot, in common sense, be a total forgetfulness of it. Now, my dear girl, cast back your thoughts upon the transactions of the last week, up to this very hour, and say, have you believed, have you remembered, have you been grateful?"

"Mamma, I am sure I believe these things to be true, for it never came into my mind to doubt them. I hope I am grateful, as I surely must be, for such great mercies: and as to remembering, my mind, as I confessed before, has been too full of other matters to think much upon the subject this week; but I suppose"—

"My dear Maria, you speak as if you did not know the meaning of words. You suppose you have a grateful remembrance of things of which you never think—you are sure you believe what it never came into your head to doubt, and, of course, not to examine. And these things you so certainly believe, and are so certainly grateful for, are nothing less than the eternal interests of your immortal spirit, the mercy that has pardoned, the sacrifice that has redeemed, the love that has suffered for you: and other matters that can so engross your mind as to exclude the thought of them entirely. And what matters? The vainest

and emptiest pursuits of a vain and empty world—the merest trifles of a life whose most important concerns are themselves but trifles in comparison with these things so easily displaced. This, Maria, is neither to believe, nor remember, nor be grateful. It is to forget at once the mercies of God and your own need of them ; to put Him most ungratefully out of mind, and virtually to disbelieve the consequences of doing so. And then the remaining clause, ‘ And be in charity with all men.’ I explained to you last Sunday what this means. Is there no anger in your heart for others’ wrong—no pride seeking to gratify itself at others’ expense—nor envy of one who has the advantage, nor contempt for one whom you surpass—no rivalship, contention, nor ill-nature ? Are love and charity the feelings of your heart towards all : and are they the feelings you have endeavoured to deserve of all ? Have you been as careful to avoid everything that might excite unholy passions in the bosom of others towards you, as in your own towards them ? Have you tried to excite envy, jealousy, and pride, or to prevent it ? Excited, was it pain or pleasure to you to see others so suffer and so sin ? Examine your feelings for the last few days, nay, your words only during the last twenty-four hours, by the beautiful description of charity in the 13th of Corinthians, and say if it be true that you are in love and charity with all men.”

“ By such an interpretation I certainly am not ; but I wish no harm to any one.”

“ It is God’s interpretation, not mine ; and it appears that of all you take for granted, nothing is the fact.”

“ You advise me, then, not to go to the Sacrament to-morrow ?”

“ That I would still leave to yourself. I would not lead you superstitiously to suppose, that, by going in this state to the Sacrament, you place yourself in a worse condition than you are in if you stay away. For whether when bidden you refuse to come, or whether coming you refuse to wear the dress appointed for the guests, the act of disobedience is pretty much the same. But, as the case appears with you at this time, I would rather see you, self-convicted and

ashamed, retiring from the table as an unmeet guest, than, in bold self-confidence, coming forward to offer to God the little remnant of your heart that the world has not engrossed, the refuse of time and spirits you have been able to snatch from the exhaustion of pleasure, professing things you do not mean, and asking blessings you cannot in conscience expect to receive. He to whom it was said, 'Friend, how camest thou in hither?' had no better portion in the feast than they who sent excuses. I need scarcely ask my Emma's determination."

"Indeed, mamma," answered Emma, "you have much need to ask, or rather to tell me: for I am much in doubt I have given a large portion of time this week to the examination of my own heart, and I find little in it that encourages me to go. I have been listening attentively to all you have said to my sisters, and have heard much that condemns me also to absence from this holy ceremony. With all my endeavours to keep in mind my Saviour's mercies, I am perpetually forgetting them; with all the warmth of gratitude I at some times fancy that I feel, I am oftener disobedient, cold, neglectful; and though I should say I believe in Christ, when it appears how little consistent with that belief my actions are, it makes me doubtful if I do so or not. If sorrow for sin be repentance, I have repented; but if, as you say, amendment be a part, I am not sure; for, perhaps, I shall not amend; and with respect to the state of my passions, as it regards my fellow-creatures, all I have learned by the close examination of every word and feeling is, that my heart is full of selfishness and insubordination. I am certainly as little worthy to intrude myself as my sisters."

"My dear Emma, it was not to the worthy the invitation was sent, but to the sincere and contrite. You are right when you say you are no more worthy than your sisters to appear; but there is this difference,—When two things were held out to you, you gave the preference to the invitation of your Lord; when you saw what occupations were likely to interfere with your devotions, you put them aside:

when you perceived of what unhallowed passions your mind was susceptible, you avoided the occasions of exciting them: so far you proved an honest desire to partake worthily of the benefits of this holy communion. The result of all your examination, and all your preparation, is, that you find yourself absolutely unworthy as to the past, and absolutely helpless as to the future. Such the result should be, and such it must be. But has this discovery made you feel less disposed or less desirous to go to the Sacrament?"

"On the contrary, mamma, it makes me more so; for the deeper grows the consciousness of my ill-deserts, the more precious becomes every emblem of redeeming mercy, the more welcome every record and remembrance of Jesus's love. If I before thought it desirable for me to be a partaker of the body and blood of Christ, and of the benefits received by them, I now know it to be necessary; for I cannot do without it. Ill-dressed, unclothed, unfitted as I am, I should like to go and try if the Master of the feast will admit me, and help me to provide myself a better garment; for I believe that none but he can weave it."

"Then, my dearest Emma, though I do not tell you you are better than your sisters, or that your conduct this week is sufficient to prove the reality of your faith, or the sincerity of your professions—for that is known only to him who reads the heart—I do not hesitate to advise you to do as you desire; in humble confidence, that he who has invited you to his feast, will graciously receive you, and enable you to be what he requires."

The Sabbath morning dawned with more than usual brightness. The three sisters went together to their parish church; fancy might say the step of one was lighter than the rest: certain it is that one only accepted the INVITATION.



lett.

Ce n'est rien que le jeûne des viandes grossières qui nourrissent le corps,
si on ne jeûne aussi de tout ce que sert d'aliment à l'amour propre.

FENELON.



THE eye that has long been accustomed to look upon the scene around us, has become familiar with its minutest peculiarities, reconciled to its deformities, and sated with its charms, can form but a very imperfect idea of the effect of that same scene on one who has never looked on it before. It is thus in everything—we lose the general effect in too close intimacy with the minute particulars. The painter feels this when he has sat hour by hour over the laboured canvas, retouching every feature, measuring every line, till the effect as a whole is so entirely lost to him, he is obliged to remove it for a time out of his sight, or have recourse to the judgment of another. The poet feels it, when, having selected word by word the materials of his composition, and fitted them to the measure of his verse, he knows that to his ear they harmonise, to his perceptions they express the idea and excite the feeling he intends; but can very inadequately judge of the impression they will make on the mind of a reader who, for the first time, comes to their perusal.

And such is the difficulty I often feel when I go about

to listen for others to what I can only hear for myself; especially when it passes over my mind, that I am listening for those to whom nothing can appear under the same aspect in which it appears to me. Features of society that I have looked upon till they seem to me too little prominent to excite attention, a young person, to whom the world is new, will likely fix upon as objects of inquiry and surprise: while those that, in minuter intimacy, I have discovered to be curious and important, they, in their hasty and unpractised glance, will either not perceive, or feel but little interest in. And thus, while I am carefully, and, as I think, very interestingly, telling stories and multiplying words about things that, for what they know, may have happened in the moon, they are wishing, wondering, and not altogether pleased, that I never happen to see, or see under so different a shape, the objects that most puzzle and surprise them. It was under the burden of this very disturbing apprehension I bethought myself for once to have recourse to memory for my tale, and relate what happened when I was as much a novice as my readers, and liable to as much mistake as they possibly can be, respecting the things I saw. But then my readers must needs be forewarned that my observations in this paper are not required to be correct; what I thought wrong was, in all probability, very right—what I thought inconsistent, might be most beautifully systematic, if I had but had the sense to perceive the due connexion of things. And as all wonder is the offspring of ignorance—ignorance of what things are, if not of what they ought to be—any surprise that I may express, is to be, of course attributed to my own inexperience at the time.

It happened once—that is the genuine way of beginning an account of things that never happened, but my readers may depend upon it this did happen some time, though I find it inconvenient to say when. It was when the habits and practices of the world were known to me only through the newspapers that reported them, or the moral essays that abused them, or the novels that misrepresented them—the world in which I had grown up being no wider than the

walls of the paternal dwelling, and no more populous than the family that dwelt in it. What ideas or expectations I had formed through the medium of these informers of the busy scene of life in which I have since so largely wandered, is not of importance to be told—my readers may be satisfied to know they were in every way mistaken. Some time about the middle of March I was invited to spend a few weeks in London, where, with all my ignorance and all my prejudices full upon me, I found myself arrived at the given period. I was a Listener then as well as now: then for myself, as now for others: and, among an infinite variety of things, the following circumstances are in memory's record as something that I heard.

“It is rather a dull time to bring a stranger to London,” said Mrs Thoroughgood; “because in Lent we see less company, and our public amusements are for the most part suspended. But after Easter we shall be particularly gay, and able to shew you everything.”

“I should like to know, mamma,” answered young Selina T., “why we may not as well live in Lent as we live all the rest of the year; for I suppose we do not live irreligiously at any time?”

“I am surprised to hear you speak thus, Selina,” said her mother; “I thought you had been taught to read your Bible, and attend your religious duties strictly; I did not expect from you so ignorant a remark—I thought you knew”—I was considering of the probability that Mrs T. had neglected to teach her daughter what she was surprised to find she did not know, when the lively Selina rejoined—

“Oh yes! dear mamma, I do know that in Lent we have no balls or plays, never ask more than twelve to dinner at once, eat salt-fish and pancakes, and go to church on the week-days. But I wanted to know the reason of it all; I am sure there is nothing about it in the Bible, and I could not find it this morning in the Prayer-book.”

“Again, my dear, I must say you are very ignorant, if you do not know that the forty days preceding Easter are kept in commemoration of our Saviour's fast of forty days in the

lonely wilderness, where, for our sakes, and for our example, he hungered and thirsted, and" —

"O dearest mamma! I know all that of course,—but I want to be told what that has to do with balls and dinner parties, and pancakes, and plays?" answered Selina impatiently.

"I should think that too obvious to need explanation, my love," said Mrs T.—I thought so too; and, seeing her hesitate, I had almost a mind to propound the matter myself, so simple and so certain seemed to me the mode of explanation, and so clear to myself was my own understanding of it. I soon had reason to rejoice that I refrained my lips, when I perceived not only the difficulty of the exposition, but my own mistakes upon the subject.

Mrs T. took off her thimble, primmed her pleasant face into the length of gravity, bade her daughter be serious, and she would explain to her what she ought to have known long ago. I thought she ought—little suspecting that I did not know myself.

There were not wanting symptoms in the old lady's manner which might have excited suspicion that she did not know—but that was impossible: the appearance must, of course, have proceeded from my want of knowledge of the world. Still there was a long pause: the old lady drew towards her the large Bible and the little Prayer-book that lay on the table, and put them carefully one upon the other, the latter at the top, ready for action. If so much preparation should seem extraordinary, be it remembered that Mrs T. had grown up at a period when, however much ladies might think upon religion, they were very little accustomed to talk about it: and few persons in the parish, except the parson, were expected to have an opinion upon the subject, much less to explain it. Mrs T.'s exordium proved nothing the worse for the delay. She began by commenting with feeling and simplicity, on the narration of our Saviour's sufferings, the object of his mission upon earth, the awful consummation of his errand that is at this season celebrated, and all the heart-affecting circumstances with

which the season stands associated in the mind of a believer.

"And does not my Salina see," she added, "why such a period should be marked and kept by those so deeply interested in its events?"

"Assuredly, mamma, I see it should be kept. We commemorate the deeds of earthly greatness—we celebrate the era of our country's freedom—we remember the birth-time and the death of those we love—if good or ill betide us, we grave, as it were, the date upon our hearts, to be no more erased, and thought recurs to it as duly as the day returns. It would seem strange, indeed, if of all important eras, the most important was alone forgotten—if of all great events, the greatest remained without appropriate celebration. Assuredly, mamma, it should be kept—but how?"

"By means appropriate to itself. Now, what does it seem to you that they would be?"

Selina hesitated; yet her countenance betrayed an emotion that said she knew; nature and feeling were in this instance better prompters than the wisdom of the schools. She had not reflected on it before, but she felt what she had not learned, and replied—

"In common sense, mamma, it surely should be this. Jesus suffered for our sins, died for our sins, rose again to free us from our sins. We were the cause of his suffering, and, therefore, should be sad at the remembrance—we were the gainers by it, and, therefore, should be glad and grateful. But as sin was the mischief, and pardon of sin the gain, it is natural that our joy, and our sorrow too, should express itself by abstaining from whatever is sinful, or can by any means be offensive to him whose passion we at this time celebrate; and I would add, that we should keep it as a season of humiliation for our past sin, and of prayer and preparation for future amendment."

"You could not have spoken better, my child. And besides, this purpose of preparation for Easter, it is required of us to follow the footsteps of our Lord; and, as he fasted forty days in the wilderness, so we have an equal

period of self-denial appointed us in imitation of his. Do you not, then, see the wisdom of our Church in setting apart the forty days preceding Easter for this good purpose?"

"Yes—but I do not exactly see how the purpose is answered by it—unless the ball and the theatre be the sins from which we are to abstain ; and dining with twelve people instead of twenty be the self-denial, and"—Selina's vivacity was fast getting the better of her previous earnestness ; but, recollecting herself, she gravely added, "But that, mamma, is confessing that these are sinful practices, which you know they are not."

"The innocent amusements of the world cannot be so : but"—Mrs T. hesitated—moved the Prayer-book off the Bible—turned it the other side upwards, and seemed at a loss for words—I thought I could have helped but I did not. "In the first place, these engagements occupy our time, and consequently leave us less for devotional duties : then they occupy our mind, and consequently interfere with the serious thought that becomes the season ; and then it cannot be denied that, though innocent amusements on the whole, there is an awful inconsistency in the gaiety and forgetfulness of such pursuits, when brought in near contact with the events at this season recalled and pictured out afresh to our imagination. You cannot, in the excitation of the theatre, think of your Saviour's dying groan—you cannot, in the hubbub of a crowded room, be in the steps of him, who, as he sat at meat with those he loved, was ever teaching them his Father's law, or speaking with them of his approaching expiation. Therefore it is not hard to understand, that, at a season when you desire to remember these things and to feel them, you must in some measure change your occupations."

I was considering how far the above ingredients might, if properly compounded, make a sin, when Selina ended at once my doubts and the conversation, of which she was manifestly tired, by the following exclamation :—

"Oh, yes ! mamma—I am perfectly satisfied of what you

mean, and beg your pardon for teasing you with such foolish questions—I see exactly, that things which are perfectly proper during the three hundred and twenty-five days in which we forget our Saviour's sufferings, would be very inconsistent during the forty days in which we desire to remember them; and since Jesus for our sakes at this time debarred himself of nature's first necessities, and endured a sufferance from which nature shrinks, we should, in imitation of Him, refrain from what we most delight in, and submit to what is most disagreeable to us—that is, we should give no balls, eat salt-fish and pancakes, and go to church."

Mrs T. smiled at her daughter's mirth, and possibly felt her satire, but contented herself with saying she was too giddy.

I was a thinker then as well as a listener, though not much of a talker as may have been perceived. Reflecting, after I retired, upon this conversation, I felt angry with Selina's ridicule of her mother's sensible remarks. The truth of what had been said respecting Easter, the propriety of keeping it, and the manner of keeping it, had deeply impressed my mind. I felt ashamed that I had never before so seriously considered it; and a feeling of pious joy animated my bosom, that, for the first time in my life, I had come into a family where I should see it observed so consistently and so devoutly. How could Selina, I thought, who had been brought up in the constant observance of so excellent a principle, have remained till this time without a perception of its suitability?

I arose the next morning in a mood of more seriousness than I remember to have ever felt before, prepared, as I thought, and willing, to make any sacrifice required of me by religion and the church at such a season.

After the usual breakfast, the carriage came to take us to morning prayers, and we rolled off to a fashionable chapel at the west end of the town. A few carriages brought a few people on the same errand—the chapel was so warm, and the seats were so well lined, and the hassocks were so near

the elevation of the knees, and the reader made such admirable haste, that, contrary to my previous prejudice, I found there was very little trouble in a week-day service, and so we rolled back again, and went about our usual occupations.

"Selina, dear, you must not be idle," said Mrs T.; "you know what a deal you have to do, and this is the last leisure week; there is scarcely a day in which we are not engaged after Easter, and our mornings will be occupied in shewing our friend about London. If you do not make use of this idle time to prepare your things, you will be sadly bustled."

"Oh, dear me! I am bustled enough as it is," said Selina. "I have saved such a quantity of things to do this week, that I never shall get through them. It is a comfort, at least, that there are a few weeks in the year in which one has time to one's self. But did you not want me to write those cards this morning?"

"Oh, yes! indeed you must," answered her mother; "for to-morrow the dressmaker will be here all the morning, measuring and taking orders for your spring dresses; and next day I have appointed the upholsterer about the furniture, and all the house will be in confusion—on Saturday you must go to the dentist—I must get all these things done this week, for I shall have no time after Easter."

"But for what days are the cards to be sent out, mamma?"

"That I must think of, if I can find time to think. There is the 1st, the 6th, the 10th. Having no parties in Lent makes them come so thick afterwards, it is scarcely possible to find days enough."

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a lady dressed in black—she made a visit of the usual length, during which she made a great many ill-natured remarks, repeated several slanderous anecdotes, and expressed herself with much bitterness against some persons who had offended her. As soon as she was gone, Selina said—"Mamma, what is Miss Tibbs in mourning for?"

"It used to be the custom, my dear, and it is still retained

by some persons who are particular, to wear mourning in Lent."

"Nay," said Selina, "if Miss Tibbs is so particular in keeping Lent, she had better abstain from speaking ill of her neighbours, which is the thing she most delights in, and forgive her enemies, which is the thing she is least disposed to."

The days passed on—everybody ate, and everybody drank, and everybody enjoyed themselves as usual. Two or three people came some days to dinner, and the entertainment was the same, and the conversation was the same, for anything I could see, as if there had been twenty—and on the days we dined alone, the objects that occupied our attention were still the same. We talked of the things we did not do, and arranged plans for doing them as soon as we might. I heard no more of Jesus, of his sufferings, or his death; of sin, or its consequences, or its pardon; nor, as far as I could perceive, was any one thinking about them. This probably proceeded from my own inexperience and want of knowledge of the world. It could not really be, as it seemed, that the season, *so properly set apart by our church*, as Mrs T. had said, for meditation, penitence, and prayer, should be passed over without any extra-serious thoughts, of any kind whatever, upon the events at this period commemorated. Certain it is, that no more allusion was made to them in word or deed, except that some one now and then took occasion to say, it was very unlucky it happened to be Lent.

"Mamma, which night are we going to the oratorio?" said Selina, on Friday morning.

"I believe, my dear, we shall have a box to-night; but you will know when your papa returns."

On this subject I felt myself quite well informed. I had learned by the newspaper that the theatres are always closed during this season, except on Wednesdays and Fridays, when they are opened for the oratorio, a sort of religious festival, as I conceived, by the names affixed to the performance, and by its being held on the same day of the week as the church prayers; days, I was aware, to which custom

had affixed a peculiar sacredness. I was well pleased with what I heard—for as this amusement was not only allowed in Lent, but confined to it by peculiar appropriation, I certainly might there expect to find something of the devotion with which I had heard the season was to be hallowed.

The box was secured—the hour came—we were duly adorned, and set off, as I supposed, to our devotions. My thoughts by the way were serious—they had not been used to be so; but what I had heard from Mrs T. had made a strong impression on me; though I was effectually puzzled that it seemed to have so little affected anybody else. I tried to compose my mind to feelings suitable to the occasion, though no one else in the carriage appeared to be doing so. But then they had been used to spend the Lent properly; I had hitherto neglected it; and the reflection caused me some feelings of regret and shame.

Shame, regret, and devotion, however, had no tickets of admission. I parted at the door with all of them, and became absorbed with such sense of pleasure as was likely to possess a youthful mind on tasting, for the first time, of such an amusement. The splendour of the house, the brilliancy of the lights, the music of the full choir, so unlike to anything I had heard before; the gay appearance of the audience, where all without was prosperity and smiles, whatever might be beneath them—thoughts of sadness would have seemed to me a sacrilege; within the compass of these walls, at least, there was a world all joy; my reflections and feelings were absorbed in sensations of unmixed pleasure. I could not discern where vice and misery hid itself in that gay crowd; or, I should rather say, presented their unblushing front, as if by acknowledged right they presided there. I could not guess how the hundreds of immortal beings were employed, who, to support a useless existence, and fill up the measure of their crimes, were doing the drudgery of such an establishment. I knew nothing of all this—but ignorant as I was, and thoughtless as I was, I was startled from my delirium of enjoyment, when, accompanied by tones from the orchestra that might seem to be the music

angels sing, I heard these words, "He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He gave his back to the smiters"—I need not pursue the words ; we know where they are, we know what they mean —those deep mysterious words, at which patriarchs and prophets wondered, which sinners treasure in their bosoms as the criminal the signet that is to stay his execution—which the penitent weeps while he listens to, and triumphs while he weeps—the words of God himself—the prophetic picture of the Saviour's sufferings for a ruined, miserable world—for the world that at this season professed to commemorate his mercy and its own degradation—for the world at that moment assembled within those walls. I looked at the person by whom the words were uttered—I looked at the audience by whom they were listened to—I marked the dazzling accompaniments of the scene. Nature and reason spake within me—for, bribed, corrupted, spell-bound as they are, they will speak sometimes if we will let them. The bold, unblushing front, the unshrinking eye, the immodest attire, the unhallowed air, on the one part—on the other, the expression of indifference or of emotions simply pleasurable, were so contrasted with the images those words brought like unwelcome spectres to my imagination, that at no moment of my life do I remember to have felt so involuntarily persuaded that these things were indeed but the fiction that they seemed—the tragic stories with which men amuse themselves. The beings before me and around me, could they believe themselves the creatures for whom the Messiah had thus suffered ? Was it they had done it, they had caused it, they, at this very time, professing to keep a fast in imitation of his sufferings, and humble themselves before him for their share in it ? It was nonsense, it was absurdity,—it was imposition that could not be passed upon a child—to suppose that they who sang, or they who listened, felt themselves to be the sinners that had been so redeemed ; had there been any bosom there to which the realising sense had come, they would have drooped their heads for shame, and gone away. No—I am bold to say, that whatever it

was before or after, the Messiah's sorrows were, at the moment, to every bosom there, a fiction—enhanced by the exquisite pathos of the music—a beautiful, exciting, heart-affecting fiction, represented by the most degraded of mankind for the amusement of the gayest and most profligate. Yet hither we had presumed to bring the word of God. Here we addressed him with the cry for mercy, here we had his name resounded from unhallowed lips, reverberating on unadoring hearts; succeeded as quickly as the scene could change, by a heathen madrigal, sung by the same performers, in the characters of Ceres and Proserpine, in which Pluto received the orisons so lately offered in mockery to the God of heaven; uttered in the same spirit, heard with the same feelings. We drop the picture. Satire grows grave when she touches on things like these; and our readers will say we preach. If there be meaning in words, or sense in anything, God's commandment was that night broken, and his name profaned; and Christians were there to hear it, and were well pleased.

But to resume my story. A few days more, and the days of Lent were ended. The *imitation* of the Messiah's fast in the wilderness was completed, the season of *humiliation* was accomplished, and we were all *prepared* for the approaching festival of Easter. The day of the Redeemer's death that ended our days of *mourning*, was decently observed in Mrs T.'s family, as was also the Sunday, the commencement of our joy for his resurrection to eternal life, and our own in his. And what it before behoved us to remember, it now behoved us as quickly as possible to forget; what was sin the week before the expiation was offered, was no sin as soon as it was accomplished—there needed, indeed, the utmost ingenuity to make up for the time that had been lost. Miss Tibbs put off her mourning; Mrs Thoroughgood would have thought it quite Methodistical to go to church in the week; Selina honestly rejoiced that Lent came but once a-year; and I—I remembered, what I hope my readers may not have forgotten, the beginning of my story. I remembered Selina's ignorance, and no longer

wondered; for neither could I perceive the connexion between the season and its observances. I remembered Mrs Thoroughgood's pious observations, and wondered what they could have meant—for I had not seen a single illustration of them in the practices or occupations of the family in the interval. One good effect, however, came of my meditations—they put me on good terms again with myself; for whatever might be the intention of our Church in instituting this fast—whether that in order to our being made conformable to our Lord in his life, it was judged necessary that we should have a season of self-denial and abstraction from the ordinary occupations and innocent delights of life—or whether, he having fulfilled for us the law, and by his sufferings done away with the need of a similar penance on our part, this was rather meant as a time of grateful remembrance than of imitation, a time of humiliation before God, and pious commemoration of his love—in either or in any case, it appeared to me that the intentions of the Church had been as well fulfilled by my forgetfulness as by their observance of the season. Whatever mistakes may be in this comparative estimate of wrong, I beg may be attributed to my inexperience and ignorance of the world.



The Children of Abraham.

And where shall Israel lave her bleeding feet?
And where shall Zion's songs again seem sweet?
And Judah's melody once more rejoice
The hearts that leap'd before its heavenly voice?

HEBREW MELODIES.



I WAS travelling once over a distant land—a land it had been, by the way I travelled of, bleakness, and barrenness, and danger. If sometimes I had loitered where there were flowers budding, fair as the first

and fairest of our spring, while I yet waited in expectation of their blowing, I saw them wither in the sunshine, fade, and pass away. If ever, amid the parched and thirsty soil, I had looked upon the bursting of a pure, clear spring, quickly there came to it some unclean thing, and muddled and polluted what had risen so pure. And often, as, beneath some shadowing tree, I had lain down to rest, before I had shod myself again to hasten forward, the cold north wind had come and stripped that tree, and robbed it of its beauty and its shade. It was a wretched land, and they that dwelt in it were like the land they dwelt in. Their well-seeming virtues rarely bore the bloom they promised, but failed at the moment of expected fruition—their wisdom, however rife it seemed to flow, flowed not far before it became mixed with error and empoisoned—their enjoyments were the evanescent verdure that could not outstand the first cold touch of sorrow. And surely I had felt pity for them as I passed, and mourned that they had not a better land to dwell in.

Having travelled thus some considerable way, I reached a spot, seeming more fair for the rude path that led to it, and beautiful in the contrast of its fertility with the coldness and barrenness of the land I had passed over. There was no barrier, that I perceived, between them; and yet were they distinct as the darkness of night from the broad light of noon. Why the inhabitants of the adjacent country did not pass on to it, I perceived not: but I concluded it was appropriated property—the hereditary possession, probably, of a people too powerful to need a landmark, or an armed outwork, against the encroachments of their neighbours. Certainly I saw that no desire was manifested on either part to take possession of the other's land: and unequal as seemed to me the destiny of each, each appeared contented to abide their portion. I entered with delight on the rich scenery of this pleasant land. I do not know that I need particularly to describe it: it was like the best spots in our native country—those that industry has toiled to cultivate, and some tasteful hand has taken pleasure to adorn.

It was like to those wide estates, that, being appropriated to some powerful and rich possessor, who finds pleasure in them, and does with them what he will, manifest in every part the influence of his interference. It was no fairy land I speak of, where magic suns gave birth to golden fruits, or necromantic power charmed the elements to stillness. But it was one where forethought had provided everything, caution had secured everything, and whatever were the natural ills to which it lay exposed, some defence against their influence, or remedy for their mischiefs, had carefully been provided. The blossoms of their gardens died like others—but their departing beauty left the fruit to ripen richly on the stem. The sun of their daytime went down like others, and often went down in clouds—but the damps of their night were like the waters of affliction to the bosom of submission, the better for its tears. When the tree that adorned it withered in the blast and passed away, there came a friendly watcher and planted another as lovely in its place. The menacing weeds sometimes came up, indeed; but quickly the eye of the inspector marked them, and put in his keen-edged tools to their destruction. Like our most highly-cultured grounds, its paths were made straight, and its rough places were made smooth—the threatening tempest passed over it harmless, and the winds that rocked its habitations to their base found them too strongly founded for destruction—the dwellers in them slept secure in danger.

The inhabitants of this happy region, I observed, were many; and they seemed to know the value of their estates. They did not live on them in idle luxury, waiting the productions of a soil, that, rich as it was, would surely so have disappointed them: but they cultivated it in cheerful expectation of no uncertain harvest. Though they enjoyed its good in common, it was not in wild misrule, the lawlessness of promiscuous possession. Each one had his place, and each one had his task; and if the proportion of each was not the same, it shewed a fair adjustment to his powers, his industry, or his deserts; it was enough to suffice him till time and circumstance should bring him elevation in the

scale ; there was enough for all ; and all were secure they should not be deprived of the possession, unless they willingly departed to some other residence.

When I had stayed some time with this people, I found that they too had a character something in conformity to the features of their country. They evinced the infirmities and dispositions of other nations ; and this appeared to be the chief taint that sullied the lustre of their state, and marred their happiness. Yet even this was not without a palliative and a corrective remedy : the laws were so good, and the administration of them so good, the punishment ensued so quickly on misconduct, and the pardon so quickly on the effectual repression of the wrong, that order and peace were the general characters of the kingdom, notwithstanding the peccability of its subjects, and the frequent interruptions of their enjoyment by the obtrusion of their faults. I became, after a time, very anxious to know who these people were, and how they came to be in possession of so beautiful a territory, while all around it and about it, as I have told, remained so bleak, so bare.

"Tell me," I said to one I thought could inform me, "from what great line of ancestry these people are descended ; the children, doubtless, of some pristine hero, who conquered for them this pleasant land, or perhaps the generation of its first possessors, who, when the inhabitants of earth were few, found it and took possession, and by their industry and wisdom made it what it is, and bequeathed it, with all its blessings, to their posterity ?"

"This land," he answered, "was not originally theirs who hold it now—their fathers did not conquer it, their progenitors did not possess it. They dwelt yonder, in the lands you passed through."

"Indeed !" I said, "most happy are they, then, in the exchange. But by what rich purchase is it theirs ?"

He answered, "It came not into their hands by purchase, but was the gift of our Sovereign Lord the King, who gave it to them and their heirs for ever."

"In reward for some service to the crown ?" I asked.

"None that I ever heard of," he replied; "it was confiscated property, and he gave it where he pleased."

"But who then, and where, are the original possessors of these lands? Do they who planted yonder vines not gather of their fruits?"

"No," he rejoined, "nor they who built those palaces may dwell in them—nor they who raised those altars may longer worship there. They were faithless, ungrateful traitors; they broke their pledged allegiance to the King, their persons were outlawed and attainted, their estates forfeited to the crown—and what the fathers made themselves the children have continued."

"What were the fathers before this happened?"

"The favourites of their Prince—the best and best-beloved of all his realm. The highest in dignity and the most happy in estate, they came, every one of them, of royal blood, and could trace their ancestors by name to a period when ours were unheard of. Here, amid the blessings surrounding us, they lived secure, no man disputing their possession; for they had been its first possessors, the sole inheritors from remotest ages."

"And what are the children now?"

"Did you not see them," he replied, "loitering in helpless indigence on the confines of our territory? Come, and I will shew you them."

We walked towards the way opposite to that by which I had entered; and I observed, amid surrounding dreariness, a few miserable hovels, the abodes of the wretched, as their appearance told—humanity was glad to see they were not more.

"Are these all that remain?" I said.

"No," answered my companion; "but they are all that reside in this part of the kingdom, wandering round the dwellings that were once their own, where now they enter not."

I looked upon those miserable ruins of departed greatness, and saw, or fancied I saw, some traces of nobility in their features—but it was so mixed with an expression of

sordid wretchedness, and abject acquiescence in disgrace, I could liken it only to the fallen statue, which the elements have discoloured, and the rank herbage overgrown, till we know not if we really perceive, or do but persuade ourselves of its former beauty. Misery, guilt, and deep-written melancholy, there certainly were upon their sallow brows—in some, I could have believed it the melancholy of penitence and shame.

“The children of royalty,” I uttered, as I looked at them, “the certain claimants of that remote ancestry of which we are all so proud! And do they want for anything?”

“It is likely they want for everything,” my guide replied; “for they have no possessions here or anywhere; they dwell upon the waste; they have no country, and no friends, and scarce a home—none but those miserable huts.”

I entered one of them. An aged man was sitting; older, I judged, in misery than in years—and yet his head was gray, as sorrow’s often is before its time. The scanty hair upon his half-bared head was strikingly contrasted with the abundant fulness of the beard. His features were harsh; there was vice in them, and there was misery—but it was vice and misery that had done its work and gathered its reward; and purposed no more, and feared no more, of either; poverty, abandonment, and despair, were the predominant characters of everything in him and about him; excepting that there lay about his feet a group of children, whose sunny foreheads and deep hazel eyes glowed with the vigour of fresh existence, as yet unquestioning of weal or woe. And even to these, the long, falling line of the nose and forehead, and the shadowing eyelid that half veiled the oblong eye, gave such an expression of pensive melancholy, one might have fancied they borrowed their features from their fate.

I spoke to the old man softly, and said his store appeared a spare one; and something I said about the condition of his house, and the contrast with their former greatness, when in possession of the adjoining lands, which, as I was told, had been his fathers’.

"They tell me so," he said, "but they were never mine; and I do not want them; for I am going to my fathers, from whom the rapacity of those strangers stole them."

"But I have heard that you forfeited them by rebellion, and were lawfully ejected."

"It may be so—but I know nothing about it. Whatever happened, happened before I was born. Compelled to toil my life through for my bread, sometimes to beg it, ay, and sometimes to steal it or forego it, I have had no time to inquire, and no one has cared to tell me."

"You do not seem so much concerned as I expected. Would you not like to enter again upon that pleasant land, and look at the dwelling of your fathers?"

"No one has invited me. Concerned! Is the loathed spider, think you, concerned when you wipe it from your gilded cornices, and cast it out as a pollution? Is the hated reptile concerned when you put your foot upon it, as too vile to be sheltered even in your dust? What matters our concern?"

"But your children—perhaps the time may come—do you not wish"—

The old man raised himself from his seat, placed his back against the humid wall, his clenched hands resting upon the staff before him. "My children!" he interrupted me—"I have said I did not know—you say I do not care—but this I know—I love my children, miserable villain as I may be, and they are suffering, outcast, and despised. The land they dwell upon produces nothing—the returning seasons bear them nothing—look at them, unwashed, unshod, and starving. Perhaps if they knew what they are, and what they might have been, they would try some means to be reconciled to their King—but who is to instruct them? Where are they to find him? They are born to misery, and they will die in ignorance, the innocent victims of their fathers' deeds, and no man comes to help them." He paused a moment—then, with increasing mournfulness, resumed—"The boastful inhabitants of yonder place talk much of their abundance. Proudly exulting in their un-

bought possessions, they cast our forlorn condition in our teeth, and weighing our wretchedness against their bliss, bid us behold in it the issue of our fathers' crimes. I have said I do not know if it be true. I do not know if their land be as abundant as they say. How should I? They have never imparted to me of its fruits. I do not know if they are really the happy creatures they profess to be. How should I? They have never bidden me to their hearths. But if it be that their halls are so wide, and their harvests so rich, and their government so beneficent as they say—ah! surely there should be room enough for these few poor children. But none will fetch them in." The father's voice grew hoarse with deepened emotion—the dark eyes of the children moistened with a tear; they knew not why, but that their father wept.

I could have wept too—but I replied, "Perhaps the Prince your fathers so much offended, forbade your re-entrance on those lands—perhaps its new incumbents hold it on condition never to admit you—or surely they had not so long left you here unfriended?"

"It may be so," the old man answered, fixing a look of lorn despair upon his children, paused a moment—then, as if a hopeful doubt had broken in upon his sadness, added, "I never heard it. I have heard he loved our fathers—they who love the fathers are not used to hate the children. It may be so—but when you go back again to yonder halls, if you see that there is anything to spare—if there be room enough in their chambers and food enough on their board, ask if they are forbidden to take in my few poor children."

Readers, I have fulfilled my commission. If you were the possessors of some rich tenement, given by the sovereign, as in former times it often has been in our country, the forfeited property of his traitor subjects to those he makes his friends—while you enjoy the gain of their disloyalty, should you feel no pity for their need? Should you leave their children to perish at your gates? I believe you would not. There is nothing more moving to our natural feelings, than to look on the residue of fallen greatness: if a suffering

pauper be pointed out to us as the child of one who was of rank and birth superior to our own, a stronger emotion of pity is excited for his degradation: for we contrast his fortunes with our own, and measure his fall as what ours might be. Still more, if you were the gainers by that change, and held the property that was once his fathers', would you not hold out to the deprived and degraded offspring, some portion of your well-spared abundance? You would go out of those pleasant lands to the bleak forest I have described, to look for those poor children that were perishing on the waste, and bring them in to live on your estates, and be at least your servants? Now, believe me, it is no fiction I have told. Jehovah has a garden that he cultures with especial care, as unlike the heathen lands that lie around it as the dwelling I have pictured to the country that was about it. He cast out in anger the original inhabitants, and put you in unearned possession of what once was theirs. A few of their outcast children, innocent of their fathers' sin, ignorant of the real cause of their degradation, and not knowing by what means to be reconciled to their offended Maker, are lying about your streets, and lurking round your doors, and you have taken no notice of them. You have not gone to their dwellings to offer them a portion of the word of eternal truth, on which you feed so richly. And you have not sought out their children to separate them from their miseries, and rear them to a better state, before habit has confirmed them in their errors and reconciled them to destruction. You know their high original—you trace with lively interest their distant pedigree, and are proud to call yourselves by the name of their fathers—it is your boast and glory to observe the law of Moses, their legislator, and Christ who was born of them. And yet you hold these ancient people in contempt, individually, if not as a people; and feel no emotion when you see them perishing without those moral and religious advantages you possess in such rich abundance, and have never been forbidden to communicate. On the contrary, you know there would be joy in heaven itself to see the offspring of a

Hebew become a spiritual Christian. The only way in which an inhumanity not natural to our hearts can be accounted for, is thoughtlessness of the circumstances in which we stand respecting these people, or ignorance of the means by which we can amend their condition.

These thoughts were suggested to me, when, on a late occasion, I went to listen where the holders of the rich blessings of the gospel were assembled to consider of the claims of these poor children; and deeply was my mind struck with the contrast I beheld. They were not indeed unfed and naked in their land of barrenness, for pity had fetched them in—but they were sitting there the suppliants for a small share of that which once was all their own—the children of Abraham were in the dress of charity—their little eyes cast down and often filled with tears, while their wants and claims were urged by those who spoke on their behalf, to wring a poor pittance from the gay Gentile crowd before them—gay in the ornaments of superfluous wealth, that, spared to them, had not been missed—and gay in the consciousness of moral dignity and enjoyment of spiritual good, that, divided with them, had surely not been lessened. The sight was to me the argument—the scene was its own sufficient illustration. Who are those? Who are these? Abraham, four thousand years ago, worshipping God on the only altar he had upon the earth, the temple of Jerusalem in all its splendour, his own presence shining in the midst, while our unknown forefathers were wandering somewhere in the wilds of uncultured ignorance, rose to my imagination with such impressive reality, everything that was said, or could be said, came short of the spontaneous emotion of my bosom, that had already run through the world's history for an explanation of the scene before me.

In determining to represent to Christians the duty of instructing Jews in general, and Jewish children in particular, I have left the grounds on which more has been said than I can find to say—they are in better hands than mine—I have left to others the strength of Scripture language, and the mysterious voice of prophecy, and put in the plea of feeling,

justice, and humanity ; because I am writing for some who may not understand those, but must be accessible to these. I do not wish to suggest any particular measures or means, but merely to awaken in the bosoms of my readers some share of the shame I feel, that I have never given any of my time, or talents, or superfluous expenditure, towards the children of Abraham—that I have not yet, even by a word of persuasion, sent a messenger out from our Christian halls to ask one of those few poor children to come in to the habitations of their fathers.



Inconsistencies.

Dieu nous développe peu à peu notre fond qui nous était inconnu ; et nous sommes tous étonnés de découvrir, dans nos vertus mêmes, des défauts dont nous étions crus incapables. C'est comme une grotte qui paraît sèche de tous côtés, et d'où l'eau rejait tout à coup par les endroits dont on se défait le moins.—FENELON.



FRIEND requested me, a short time since, to write a paper on CONSISTENCY. I was well pleased with the suggestion ; it is a pleasant thing to have a subject given, when everybody writes so much, that subjects are growing scarce ; I thought I would quickly set about it, and indite a paper describing the beauty, and loveliness, and excellence of CONSISTENCY. But when I would have gone to work

to paint the portrait, I found myself in no small difficulty—for where was the original ? Had I any acquaintance with it ? Had I ever seen it ? Imagination may make a drawing, but a portrait it cannot make—and what would it avail me to describe an imaginary being, whose features none would recognise, when I profess to draw always from the life, and describe only what I hear and see ? What was to be done ? I could think of but one way of emerging from this great difficulty, without breaking the promise I had given to touch the subject. If there were such a thing as CONSISTENCY—and I had never heard it doubted—it must be somewhere

to be found; why not look after it? I must, of course, have seen it often, and my ignorance of its exact features, and the contour of the countenance altogether, must be the result of inattention or forgetfulness. This might be repaired, as ignorance mostly may, by diligent research; and I resolved that it should be so. I resolved to listen everywhere, and look at everything, and inquire of everybody, till I should find my subject, and so have no more to do but to paint the resemblance of it. I put my pencil in my pocket—and my Indian-rubber, lest I should sketch a feature wrong—and patiently resolved to delay the portrait till I had seen the individual, whom I did not doubt to meet in some of the ordinary walks of society, now that I had seriously set myself to watch for her. The progress of my researches is what I wish to disclose to my readers.

It happened, a short time after, that I was staying in a house where, without that sort of profusion that intimates abundant wealth, there was an air of ease and liberality that spoke poverty equally distant. As many servants were kept as could do the required service well; but not so many as usually prevent its being done at all. As much ornament was about the house as gave a tone of elegance and comfort to the apartments; but not so much that everything must be bundled up in sacks of brown holland, till somebody is expected worthy to look upon it. The dress of the family was genteel, perhaps a little *recherché*; but not so as to convey the idea that the great essential of their happiness, the cardinal virtue of their character, was to have their clothes becoming and well made. In short, the whole air of the mansion seemed to say, We have not enough to squander, but we have enough to enjoy.

It befell on an occasion, that we—that is, myself and the ladies of the family—sat pleasantly engaged in our morning occupations, about as important as such occupations usually are—that is, one was making a frill, and another was unpicking a frill that somebody else had made—one was making match-boxes for the chimney, and another was making matches to put into the match-boxes, and so on. A

person was announced who came to solicit a contribution to some charitable efforts making in the neighbourhood for the relief of indigence, or suffering of some kind, I do not exactly remember what. The lady of the house listened with much civility to the application; fully approved of the object and the proposed means; wished all manner of success, and greatly lamented that her very limited income did not allow of her doing so much good as she desired! They had contributed already to so many things, the objects of private charity that presented themselves were so numerous, it was quite impossible to assist in any new efforts. The applicant, who, as an intimate friend of the family, used the liberty of persuasion, again pointed out the necessity of the case, and the Christian duty of dispensing what we hold of providential bounty. The lady replied extremely well—spoke fairly of the beauty and the duty of charity—admitted that she did not give so much as she should feel to be right, and as she should be inclined to, but that she actually had no more to spare—her income was only sufficient for the proprieties of her condition—she never expended anything unnecessarily—she wished she had a few hundreds a-year more, and she would give a guinea to this undertaking most willingly—there was nothing for which she so much desired wealth. Then turning to her daughters she said, “I do not know how the girls’ allowance stands—they are always anxious to give, and I am sure this is a case in which they would feel deeply interested—but they, like myself, cannot do all they wish.”

“I really am sorry,” said the elder daughter, “but I have given away every farthing I can possibly spare—if I had a shilling left that I could do without, I should think it my duty to give it on such an occasion.”

“I have no money,” said one of the younger girls, “but I am thinking whether I can assist the charity in any other way—whether I can take any part in the trouble of providing—of visiting the”—

“I am sure, Julia, you cannot,” interrupted her sister; “you know you have more to do already than you can get

through. Our time is taken up with so many things—it is impossible you can undertake anything more."

"Well, I believe it is," answered Julia; "but this is so plainly a case of urgent necessity—a duty so obvious, that we certainly ought to aid it in some way."

"We ought, if we could, my dear," said her mamma; "but no one is required to do more than they can. As it has not pleased Providence to give us any superfluity of wealth, much is not required of us. It cannot be our duty to give more than we can spare with propriety, and in justice to ourselves and our families—I am really sorry, because I think it a proper case."

The contribution was declined, and the visitor departed. I held my tongue, because I always hold my tongue; but I had been thinking all the time. I thought it was a pity people so charitably disposed had so limited an income—I thought how painful it must be to them to feel that there was no way in which they could make their circumstances yield to the claims of their suffering fellow-creatures, without trespassing on the expenditure imperiously demanded of them by the proprieties of life. And, as my secret reflections are apt to excuse very widely from the point where they begin, and no one spoke to interrupt me, I went on to think what is the real extent of charity that Christian principle may demand of any one. It is immediately perceptible that it cannot be to do away with the distinctions Providence has made, and throw from us the advantages and indulgences Providence has given, and disenable ourselves to support the expenditure required by our station, itself a means of dispersing wealth, and averting poverty from the industrious. A limit, therefore, there must be to every one's liberality. But can that limit be within the point where a case of real want presents itself, and the possessor of wealth *can* command, without injustice or injury to any one, something to bestow? I was just entering in thought upon this wide field of rumination, when the servant announced the arrival of a vender of certain rare articles of dress and curious wares from abroad—things as pleasant

to the eye of taste as to that of vanity. The vender was willingly admitted. Everything was examined, many things were wished for, a few things were purchased. Mamma bought some ornaments for the table—the eldest girl bought some ivory winders for her thread, much prettier than the wooden ones she had in use before—Julia bought a gilded buckle to fasten her waistband. These things were all very pretty—not very extravagant in price—harmless indulgences of taste—the produce of some one's industry—the superfluity the Creator has provided means for, and therefore cannot disapprove. But they were all unnecessary. The one lady had added nothing to her influence or respectability by the ornaments for her table—the second lady had added nothing to her comfort or happiness by exchanging wooden winders for ivory ones—the third lady had added nothing to her grace or beauty by a new buckle for her waistband. "Therefore," I said within myself, "their words and their actions do not consist. They said there was nothing for which they so much valued wealth as to distribute it to the necessitous. That was not true—they preferred to spend it on themselves. They said they had not any money to spare, though they felt strongly the claim that was made on them. That was not true—they could spare money the first time they felt inclined. Had these people said they had given in charity as large a portion of their income as they thought it their duty to deprive themselves of, and wished to give no more, it had been well; and, whether right or wrong, they had spoken honestly; but inasmuch as they said they wished to give, and regretted that they could not, their words and their deeds were not consistent."

"Good morning, dear," said Mrs White to her cousin Mrs Grey, as I chanced to hear one morning on the Parade at Brighton; "I have a favour to ask of you—our girls are going to have a quadrille party next week—I wish you would let your young people come."

"You know I do not like my girls to enter into those things"—

"Not when it takes them into public, and leads to habitual dissipation—but in private parties, and when you know what company they mix with, and when you are sure they will neither hear nor see anything calculated to pervert their principles or corrupt their minds, it is impossible you can imagine any harm in a party merely because they dance. We shall not have above thirty people."

"No, certainly not because they dance. To dance, literally, is only to move in a certain measured step, and jump a certain number of inches from the ground, and go about the room in a prescribed figure, instead of the irregular figure and unmeasured pace they would observe were they running upon the hills. I am not so absurd as to suppose there can be any harm in this motion more than in any other motion. Therefore that my girls do not come is not merely because you have dancing, but I do not like that sort of party for them at any rate. It is a scene of display—an exhibition of the person and excitation of the mind, that they are better and happier without, and I should be sorry they acquired a taste for it."

"I cannot think why you should fear their having a taste for an innocent amusement that all young people enjoy—you are not bringing them up for the cloister, I suppose?"

"By no means: I bring them up to be agreeable and useful in society, and therefore would not wish to unfit them for it—but you cannot pretend to say there is any real enjoyment of society, any mental improvement to be expected, or benevolent feeling to be cultivated, in these parties?"

"Perhaps not—I cannot say there is—but at least there is no harm."

"That is not so certain—I apprehend a great deal of harm may be done. A great many wrong feelings are excited—if they are much noticed, and have the best partners, vanity and self-esteem are excited—if they see others succeeding better, jealousy is excited: jealousy, and vanity, and self-esteem, are sins, and in all sin there is harm. Then there is so much thought and care about what they

are to wear, and how they shall look, and what will be thought of them by strangers—a set of people, in whose approbation or affections they can never find credit or advantage, whom they care nothing about, and to whom, therefore, I would not have them feel anxious to commend themselves by such factitious means. They are contented now with pleasing those who know and love them, and in whose society they find advantage—I would rather they did not come to you to acquire new desires, and divert their minds from more rational pursuits."

"I would not persuade you against your wishes—I know your sort of religion forbids you to conform to what you call the practices of the world—but I do not perfectly understand to which of its practices you do, and to which you do not, object."

The ladies parted. Mrs Grey and myself walked home to find the young ladies, to whom their mamma mentioned what had passed. They gave entire assent to her opinions ; spoke with more vehemence and less moderation against the vanity and wickedness of such amusements—pitied their cousins' corrupt propensities, and detailed half-a-dozen instances of the spirit of emulation, and contention, and display, exercised in parties of the kind ; and then they talked about renouncing the world, and its pomps, and its delusions—and the spirit of self-renunciation, meekness, and humility, that could only be maintained away from scenes of dissipation, rivalry, and display—and so on, and so on—and I thought they talked uncommonly well, only rather too fast ; particularly as nobody was disposed to contradict them.

I observed, however, that they were remarkably busy all the time, as if in the act of preparing for something.

"Mamma," said Charlotte, "have you brought the flowers for our bonnets ?"

"No, my dear, but we will send for them."

"Well, but we must make haste—the meeting begins in an hour or two, and we shall not be ready—ring the bell." The bell was not answered. "Ring again." The bell broke—that was the bell-hanger's fault. "Where is John ?"

—"John is gone out, ma'am."—"How tiresome! then Betty must go."—"Betty is about Miss Charlotte's pelisse that must be done to put on this morning."—"Was ever anything so provoking!—then, cook, you must go."—"I am just putting down the meat, miss, and can't leave it."

"My dears," said Mrs Grey, "you can wear your bonnets as they are."

"No, mamma, that is impossible—we had better not go at all."

"Then you must fetch them yourselves."

"Yes, and how are we to be ready? Everybody will be there before us. Things always happen so contrarily!"

And now a certain quantity of ill-humour, and a considerable quantity of impatience, were manifested on all sides. Mamma blamed the girls, first for thinking about their dress at all, and then for not having thought of it sooner. The girls wondered their mamma had not brought in the flowers. John was blamed for not being at home when he had been sent out—Betty was blamed for being busy when she had been set to work—the cook was blamed for dressing the meat, though no one, as I believe, meant to go without their dinner. The ladies were what, in domestic phraseology, is called *put out*; and, when that takes place in a family, it does not signify who is to blame, or what the matter is—everybody must submit to be in the wrong.

Time mends all things. The young ladies went to the anniversary of some charitable society in the town—and the young ladies came home again.

"Well, my dears," said Mrs Grey, "how have you been pleased?"

"Tolerably," replied Ann; "but we were so late, and got such bad seats—I could not enjoy it at all. Do you know that there were those Miss Browns in the High Street, sitting before us in the best seats—and they would not make room for us, though they knew very well who we were. A great many people put themselves forward who have not done half so much for the charity as we have."—"Dear, yes," said Charlotte, "and I had such a vulgar woman next me—she

would speak to me, and I was quite afraid lest people should think I knew her."—"And, mamma, the three Miss Blacks were there—their servants were in such gay liveries—it made me feel ashamed of John's old clothes. Julia Black was very rude to me,—but I took care to be quite as rude to her—for I think myself of as much consequence as she is."—"Lady Buff was there—I wish we could have gotten up to speak to her—people must have thought we belonged to nobody."

"Those who knew you, had no occasion to think, my dear: and those who did not, are not of much consequence to you. But you have not told me what you heard."

"Oh, we heard a great deal of good—I wonder my cousin Whites were not there—much better for them than going to balls—it was a very interesting meeting; but there were not so many people of consequence there as last year—these things always go off. There were some excellent speeches—it vexed me to hear that disagreeable man who was so rude to us once at the committee, so very much applauded—I quite hate that man; but he made by far the most sensible and religious speech."

To that connexion of ideas, which, on the repetition of a single word, brings back to memory all with which it has sometime been associated, it was, doubtless, owing, that I at this moment thought of pomps, and delusions, and inconformities—and self-subjection, and meekness, and humility—and love of approbation, and fear of opinion, and rivalry, and contention: and a great many other things that had not much to do with the dinner we were eating, or the meeting we were talking of. Had Mrs White been there, a part of her doubts had been solved at least—for though she had not learned what it was of the world the Miss Greys' religion taught them to renounce, she had certainly discovered what it was not. Is it the practice of the world, or its spirit, that stands most opposed to religion? Avails it anything to renounce the one and keep the other? I saw no CONSISTENCY between the morning's discourse and the evening's, except in volubility of speech.

I was visiting lately a friend in the country ; a rational, good sort of woman ; the queen, by long established courtesy, of a populous village, where nobody thought themselves of more consequence than herself. She had been a very happy woman all her life, and might have continued so to the end of it, had she not been disturbed by the conduct of her neighbours, and certain disorders that had broken out in the village. All Lady Betty Ball's sorrows grew out of her warm attachment to the Church of England, and very susceptible aversion to everything that looked like a departure from its rules, or a dissent from its opinions. Some of her neighbours, and even the curate of the parish himself, were beginning to disturb her peace by manifesting most dangerous symptoms of dissent. The former, in spite of her opposition, persisted in teaching grown people to read, and collecting children into Sunday schools—means directly tending to make sectarians of them. Some had even gone so far as to read the Bible to the sick and dying poor, and draw their attention to the eternal world—a dangerous encroachment on the rights of the established ministry. Nay, such was the spirit of dissent amongst them, it was becoming a common thing to hear religion spoken of in society, and theological subjects discussed at table. But what could stay the infection, when the minister himself had caught it, and actually took part in a Bible Society, refused to go to the Assembly Rooms, and administered the sacramental emblems to three or four people at a time, without reading the appointed words to each one separately ? Then the poor—the very poor—had come into the work of subversion : she had heard with her own ears a day-labourer singing Toplady's hymns as he sat at dinner under a haystack : and she had seen with her own eyes a washerwoman reading a tract, as she paused to rest her bundle on a milestone by the roadside. The ringing of the church bells on a Thursday evening totally suspended her appetite—on a Wednesday or Friday, provided it were at eleven o'clock, and there were no sermon, it was not observed to have the same effect. Lady Betty had great respect for the authorised version of the

Scriptures in proper time and place : for instance—any part of it on the Sunday, or the Proper Lessons on any day—but if she chanced to see a Bible in the kitchen window that looked as if it had moved since Sunday, or in her children's hands after their lesson had been said, the spectre of dissent rose immediately to her afflicted vision, and her concern for the Establishment took no rest till she had suppressed the innovation. To hum a psalm-tune on a week-day, to like an extempore sermon, to refuse a game of cards, or to be shocked at the use of an accidental oath, were things she held especially, and about equally, dangerous to the Church—the friend who was convicted of either lost her esteem, and the servant who was suspected of either lost her confidence.

Partly from participation in her love of the Church, and partly from the tenderness I always have for the honest zeal that takes fright even at the bugbears of its own imagination when they seem to endanger the thing it loves, I should have felt a great deal for Lady Betty's sorrows, had I not observed there were times and circumstances in which her respect for the Church, and its decisions, and its wisdom, was considerably abated. The established religion has appointed the celebration of the Sabbath, and enjoins on its members to attend those appointments strictly—it orders all secular affairs to be suspended—the sale of the necessaries of life to be forborne—the unnecessary labour of man and beast dispensed with—the amusements of the idle, as well as the toils of the industrious, to be superseded by public manifestations of religious reverence, and private exercise of devotion. Lady Betty was of another mind; she could make a better use of this day than that to which the Church has assigned it. It was the best day of the seven for travelling, because there were fewer things on the road, and there was not much else to be done—except the occupations to which the Church devoted it, and they were of no consequence. She would go to the morning service, and so might her children, if there was nothing to prevent—that is, if there had not fallen a shower in the night to make it damp;

or there was not a cloud in the heavens that might produce a shower by and by ; or she had not slept too late to be ready within ten minutes after the bells had done ringing. Two services are ordered ; but she held the second altogether superfluous—the carriage, and of course the horses, and of course the servants, were always required at three o'clock for her customary drive. She liked orthodox religion in inferior people, provided always it did not interfere with the orthodox irreligion—that is to say, the convenience of their superiors. She did not disapprove of her servants going to church—but it was seldom convenient to spare them. Articles were purchased from her tradespeople on Sunday—the law is otherwise, but it was convenient. Persons were employed to fetch things, and carry things, and do things, on the Sabbath, in direct opposition to the law's command that they should be at church : but this too was convenient. The Church has issued a Catechism for the instruction and guidance of the young, and Lady Betty's children were most carefully taught it, and made to repeat it—but they were not taught, nor indeed allowed, to follow or believe it. Their mother would have thought them very superstitious had they feared the influence of an evil spirit, and very methodistical had they expected the influence of a good spirit ; she would have been much vexed had they grown up with a contempt for the vanities of life to which she reared them, or a distaste for the pomps and splendours she taught them to aspire to. The articles of the Christian faith, as explained by the Church, she would not allow to be so much as named before them, lest it should put odd notions into their heads ; and in respect to the keeping of all God's commandments—that might be very well, according to her own interpretation of them, but not according to that of the Church, given in the Catechism : for they were by precept and example taught to consider their own advantage first, their neighbour's benefit second, and God's requirements last. They were to obey lawful authorities when it was dangerous or disreputable to do otherwise—but to circumvent the law, to evade it, or furtively to defraud the

revenue, were daily practices. They might not tell a lie, so called; but they were taught to tell as many indirect ones, by false representations, false excuses, false politeness, as might suit their purpose: and in respect to slander, evil-speaking, unkind and malevolent feelings, if they were ever checked in these, it was only because children should not be encouraged in them: daily proof was before their eyes, that when they ceased to be children, there would be no harm in these things. The Church has appointed certain times for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and earnestly exhorts her members to be present there, and duly to receive it. Here Lady Betty dissents again—she can only attend once a-year, or when she happens to have a leisure week—that is, a week free from common engagements, to prepare herself for the ceremony. In opinions it were endless to trace out the differences—the Church teaches her perpetually to repeat in public, that she is a ruined and corrupted creature, needing the interference of divine grace to reconcile her to God, and make her meet for eternity—but she insists in private that she is a good sort of a person, and that her acquaintance are very good, and nobody is in need of conversion but papists and pagans, and nobody in need of repentance but drunkards and pickpockets. In short, I could not be long with Lady Betty, without perceiving that she dissents from the Established Church in opinion, in practice, in everything: and therefore is not consistent in her fears for it.

“Mamma,” said little Julia to her mother, one of my intimate friends, “what is the reason you would not let us play at cards last night, when we wanted to amuse our little party—you let the boys play at marbles—I should like to understand the difference?”

“The difference,” replied my friend, “is almost too nice for you to perceive—yet there is a difference, and perhaps I can make you understand it. Marbles is the game of our childhood, and in no danger of becoming the passion of our later years. It is also a game of skill and not of chance;

what we win, therefore, is in some sense earned, and consequently ours ; which it is not honestly, when we come into possession by the chances of the game. I should, however, object to playing at marbles, or anything else, for money, lest it should induce a love of gambling that would soon transfer itself to other ventures. Cards are generally played for money. They might be a most innocent amusement in childhood, were there no danger of their becoming the taste of the woman, and were there nothing to be won or lost by the game."

"But what, mamma," said the little girl, "is the harm of winning or losing?"

"If you win, what you gain is not honestly yours—you neither earn it, nor deserve it, nor receive it as a voluntary gift—it is not therefore a lawful possession. The law of man does not consider it so, since the gamester is not obliged to pay his debts ; and the law of God, I believe, would still less consider it so. This appears a small matter, while the sum is small ; but there is no limit to a moral maxim of this sort—a little and a little added, and the sum becomes a large one. The yet greater evil is the feeling excited while you play—the eagerness, the anxiety, the temper, the impatience, and the ultimate vexation—it is impossible to see a party of children play at cards for money, and not perceive these effects, even more obviously than among elder people, because they have less control over their emotions to suppress or conceal them. All these unnatural stimulants to passions, these morbid stirrings of the spirits, are destructive to the simple, calm, and innocent delights of childhood, and creative of a desire for excitation, which the duties and ordinary enjoyments of after life are scarcely likely to supply. I had the same reason for not allowing you to put your money into the raffle. I consider that the feeling of pleasure which would attend your winning, or of pain in losing, would be equally injurious to the mind it acted on, as arising from no legitimate cause of pain and pleasure ; besides that the desire of winning—and if there were no desire to win, there would be no pleasure in playing

—must be gratified at the cost of your antagonist. A most dangerous taste to cultivate is the desire of succeeding at another's cost, and that without any superior merit or exertion of our own."

Here the conversation ended. I thought the mother's remarks very sensible and just, and indisputably applicable to the years of childhood, whatever they might be later: but a surprise awaited me. I had been invited by my friend to accompany her the following day to the school at which her elder daughters were educating, to be present at the distribution of prizes. As some of my readers have inferred, from my former remarks on the subject, that I disapprove of prizes altogether, I may take this opportunity of assuring them I do not. Reward is the natural fruit of merit, and I would have it ever be its attendant. In a school or elsewhere, I would have each one rewarded according to their merit. But it should be their abstract, not their comparative success—a prize for reaching some given point, not for outstripping, without effort, a less competent but as willing competitor. This by the way—for what I went to see is by no means to the point.

When we had passed the stone wall and iron gate by which the corruptions of the world are supposed to be excluded from minds not sufficiently matured to resist them, we were shewn into the hall of this mansion of education, already crowded with the young candidates for honour or reward—as yet I knew not which. They wore their gayest dress, and the apartment was decked as for festivity; but it did not strike me that the countenances, as I examined them successively, wore exactly a festive aspect—there was an expression of painful anxiety in most, and in those that had an air of confident gaiety, it did not seem to sit altogether easy. There was not one among them I could have selected as the picture of conscious merit waiting its reward. I began to apprehend that, by some strange mischance, not one among them thought she could make good her claim. The ceremony began, and the names of many were called in succession. As each young lady heard her own, a vivid ex-

pression of pleasure passed over her features, but they soon resumed the previous expression of anxiety; while those who did not hear their names, changed their air of doubt to one of sullen despondency. I begged to know the meaning of this proceeding, and was informed that those whose names were not called, had, on previous examination, been found undeserving to be admitted as competitors for reward. Nothing could be more just than that those who had merited no recompense should expect none, and receive none—though I did not perceive why they should have been kept to this time in ignorance of their exclusion: the harassment of uncertainty and suspense not being considered particularly good for the susceptible spirits of childhood. The more deserving competitors were now numbered, and an equal number of ornamental cards were put into a most portentous bag of bright blue satin. Now again I was a little puzzled: there were fifteen ladies of this non-excluded class—they were of different ages, and most likely of very different attainments—but to all appearance they must be of exactly equal merit, for the same bag received all the cards, and the cards that went into the bag were all alike. As my old trick of listening could avail me nothing, where the most profound and suspensive silence prevailed, I was obliged to betake myself to guessing how this could be. My best conjecture was, that to avoid all rivalry, every deserving pupil was to have a prize proportioned to her individual merit, and that, though my eye could not perceive it, there must be written on each card the name of a lady, and the prize adjudged to her. It is true, I did not exactly see how these decrees of justice were to find their way out of the blue satin bag into the fingers of the rightful possessor; unless Merlin, or Katerfelto, or some other of the conjuring tribe, were hidden at the bottom of it, while each in succession thrust in her little hand. What was my surprise when, out of fifteen ladies who had been pronounced deserving of reward for their improvement in music, the occasion of this first lottery, only one gained the prize—not by merit, or talent, or industry, superior to her competitors,

but by the accident of putting her fingers on the right card —while all the rest, though judged deserving of reward, were to suffer the disappointment of excited expectation, and see another enjoy the recompense to which their own claim had been admitted equal, and perhaps was known to be superior! I need not describe the repeated ceremony—one after another the lotteries went on—for each different branch of education. I turned to my friend when the ceremony concluded, and asked her how she could suffer the minds of her children to be thus acted upon—their feelings thus senselessly excited—the very spirit and essence of gaming thus instilled? She said it was the custom of the school; and she had never thought of any harm there could be in it. I reminded her of the conversation of the preceding evening with her little Julia, and remarked on the inconsistency of her keen perception of danger in the one case, with her blind insensibility to it in the other. For my own part, this system seemed to me such an outrage upon common sense, that on any evidence but fact I could not have believed any rational governess could invent, or any careful parent suffer, such a practice. When all was over, I made especial inquiry into the results; and I found one girl, whom I knew to be by no means the best, laden with prizes, exultingly setting off to her home to exhibit proofs of an advancement she had not made, and display her triumph over companions she had by no means equalled. I saw another, an industrious, clever girl, going off, with tearful eyes and saddened spirits, without a single testimony of good conduct or recompense of exertion: though she had been worthy of drawing for every prize, and of all the school had best deserved to be so.

We condemn the wisdom of our ancestors, who, when they could not decide the merits of a cause, referred it to the decision of Heaven by some superstitious ordeal. Do the ladies who superintend these schools really believe that fortune will respect the merits of their pupils, and do they so intend to teach them? Or—more probable result, and yet more dangerous lesson for their after-life—do they mean

to teach them that success goes by hap, and not by merit; that it is *better to be lucky than wise*; that to win a prize is easier than to earn it? We doubt not that many of our readers who are not in these secrets, will think the practice so strange a one, we need not to have spoken so much about it. I should have thought so too, did I not know that it is practised by some governesses, and suffered by many parents, who, I believe, act under the influence of the best moral feeling, and the purest religious principle, in the management of the children committed to their care, and would by no means suffer them to receive such impressions under any other form.



More Inconsistencies.

Qu'attendons nous des hommes ? Ils sont foibles, inconstants, aveugles : les uns ne veulent pas ce qu'ils peuvent, les autres ne peuvent pas ce qu'ils veulent. La nature est un roseau cassé ; si on veut appuyer dessus, le roseau plie, ne peut nous soutenir, et nous perce la main.—**FANELON.**

MR. LISTENER,



AVING observed with much concern the ill success of your researches after **CONSISTENCY**, and felt a growing impatience that the portrait was not produced, it came into my mind that I might assist you in the search, happening to be intimate with a family who are continually speaking of it, and that after the manner of a familiar acquaintance. The word being perpetually on their lips, I could not doubt but they were well acquainted

with the thing, and perhaps could afford the very information you had sought so far in vain. Anxious now as ever to assist you, I proposed myself a short residence among them, not liking to expose my ignorance by directly asking for the information I wanted. Nothing could be more promising than the first aspect of things. With the first breath I drew in their abode, I seemed to inhale a love of this unknown—and so contagious is example, that, before many days had elapsed, I found it impossible to express myself on any sub-

ject without using the word. It is a delightful word—it will do for anything—with the help of a small negation it will stand for sin, or folly, or falsehood, or treachery, or caprice, or infidelity, or anything within the whole compass of moral defectibility. Whenever a fool committed folly, we said he was not consistent—when the false-hearted did one thing and professed another, we said they were not consistent—when the selfish betrayed their friends to serve themselves, we said they were not consistent—in short, whenever a sinner, under any form, committed sin, we said he was not consistent. I was delighted—for, in all the languages I had learned, I never found a word so universally applicable. But, most of all, was it valuable to designate those nameless discrepancies in our friends which all are quick to perceive, but no one can readily describe. We were no slanderers, and would not for worlds have said those who did not please were false, or ignorant, or disagreeable, or anything that perhaps they might not be—but we could always say they were Inconsistent, without danger of contradiction; and we did say so of every one who had the misfortune to come within our observation. In one respect, at least, we obeyed the spirit of the Christian precept—for we treated our enemies in this matter to the full as well as our friends. Among the abundant examples and countless uses of this term, I know not where to select for your information—any instance I may give you can be but one of thousands.

We were just rid of some evening visitors, with whom we had spent several hours in the rapid interchange of most polite discourse. They had said everything that language can express, in praise of all that was in the house, or about the house, or within ken of any of the windows, and the ladies, my companions, had given back to the full the measure they had meted. If they said our drawings or fancy works were beautiful, we said they were nothing in comparison with theirs: if they praised our music, we were surprised that they, who were used to so much better, should be so very kind as to listen to it. We said their children were

the largest, and their dogs the smallest, and their jewels the brightest, and their words the wisest, in the known world—for anything I knew, it might be so, for they were strangers to me. As soon as they were gone, Miss Sarah said, with a sigh, “What dreadful flatterers those people are—and they swallow it as willingly as they bestow it! There is no way of pleasing them but by the grossest compliments. They are very false: I know exactly what they mean when they admire anything—they only want you to say that something of theirs is better. I make a point of saying so directly, because I know they will be disappointed if I do not.”

“Are they very superior people?” I asked.

“Oh, by no means: they understand nothing: they praise everything and everybody alike: they think flattery must please others because it pleases them, and they bestow it as liberally as they desire it.”

“There is, at least, good-nature in the intention.”

“If they were more consistent in their good-nature; but they will not continue to praise us in our absence, I doubt.”

“If they do,” thought I, “we shall have better than requital at their hands:” but we were quite agreed that it was inconsistent to flatter people in their presence, and speak ill of them the moment they were gone.

“I wish,” said Matilda, one morning, with reference to a lady who had just made her first visit at the house—“I wish Miss N.’s conduct were more consistent. If I knew nothing of her, I should be greatly taken with her manner and conversation this morning: I should really think her very sensible and serious”—

“And how do you know she is not?” I asked, interrupting her.

“One can only judge the tree by its fruits; and her conduct is so very inconsistent.”

“In what way do you mean?”

“I really do not exactly know; I have very little acquaintance with her; I have avoided it, because I think such people dangerous; but I have heard many things of her, not at all consistent with a religious character. It is very easy

to talk and profess, but when one knows she does not mean what she says, there is danger in having the form of godliness without the power."

I admitted the justness of this remark, but still desired to know wherein Miss N. stood more exposed than others to this danger : for I had been much pleased with her conversation in the short visit she made us. Urged again, Matilda said Miss N. wore feathers, which she thought not consistent with the sobriety of dress that becomes a Christian ; then she had heard she went into gay company ; she did not know if it was true, but she supposed it was ; she often saw her speaking to people of that sort—the Scriptures had required us not to be conformed to the fashions of the world. I thought the Scriptures had also commanded us not to speak evil one of another, nor to judge one another ; but I did not make the remark.

"I have heard," continued Matilda—"I do not remember where I heard it, but I know I heard it from somebody—that she is not particularly strict in the observance of the Sabbath—it is impossible a person can be a child of God, and break his positive commandments."

I thought it was one of the positive commandments that we should not bear false witness against our neighbours. But I made no remark, at this time not quite agreeing with my friend ; for if Matilda did not know what she said to be false, she did not know it to be true ; and if it was true, she had only assumed what she began with asserting, that Miss N. professed what she did not mean. How did Matilda know what Miss N. professed ? In our recent conversation, confessedly the first she had ever had with her, I am certain she had not professed not to wear feathers, or not to go into company ; and, supposing Matilda did not profess to speak no evil, and bear no false witness, I considered that, however wrong I might regard them, both or either, I could not well apply to them my favourite word—a great disappointment to me.

Seated at tea in the balcony of our house, we were conversing one evening on a melancholy occurrence in a family

of the neighbourhood, in which a young person had been reduced to a state of deep and morbid melancholy, by the effects of long-protracted anxiety, ending in severe and remediless affliction. It came to be considered, in the course of conversation, how far such a result was consistent with religious submission to the will of Heaven. It was very sapiently proved, that by a mind entirely detached from the things of earth, the loss of earthly things could not consistently be felt—that a mind entirely trusting in the wisdom and power of God could not consistently suffer from anxiety—that a mind totally acquiescent in the will of God could not consistently feel regret at the dispensations of Providence—and, above all, that where no loss, or anxiety, or regret could be felt, the mind could not consistently be deranged by them. These were truths beyond all controversy, and we were thence successfully going on to deduce the inconsistency of this helpless sufferer in particular, and of everybody else in general, ourselves excepted, when the rolling of distant thunder in the horizon announced a coming storm, called off our attention, and turned the conversation. The storm arose. The young ladies became desperately frightened—they did not know for what, but lest some harm should happen to themselves, or somebody, or something that belonged to them. When I endeavoured to soothe them by assurance that no ill would happen, they grew angry. How could I be sure of that? Lightning often kills people—wind often blows houses down—people sometimes lose their eyes or their hearing in a thunder-storm—in short, they thought it quite wicked not to be frightened when there was danger, and distressed when there might be suffering, to others, if not to ourselves. The storm subsided—but not so the fears. They had now, indeed, a definite object; very considerable damage was supposed to have been done on a distant part of the coast, where they had property, and they might possibly be very material losers by the accident. Gloom, fretfulness, and anxiety pervaded the house through all that night and the succeeding day. With the hopefulness generally experienced by the uninterested spec-

tator of others' anxieties, I represented to them every probability or possibility, reasonable or unreasonable, that their property might not have been injured—but they persisted in expecting the worst, in rejecting all palliations of the possible mischief. They would not eat—they would not sleep—they would not divert their minds by employment, or relieve themselves by conversation: and when they thought they perceived in me an opinion that they shewed more uneasiness than was warranted by a yet uncertain ill, and more impatience under an imagined loss, than might have been reasonable even under a known one, they observed, that to be less anxious than they were, would be unnatural, insensible, impossible—in short, inconsistent with common sense. It did not happen to us at that time to renew the conversation of the balcony—of minds detached from earth—of trust that could not be shaken—of acquiescence that could not be moved—of that self-possession, in short, that could not be disturbed in a devoted and well-regulated mind.

Among our intimate acquaintance, there was one young person whose liveliness of manner and buoyancy of spirits made her the life of her family and the zest of every company she happened to mix with. She went gaily and cheerfully about every task that circumstance or choice imposed; she spoke of everything with playful vivacity, and did everything with an air of confident expectation; meet her when you would, or where you would, there was always brightness in her eye, and a smile on her brow, and activity and enjoyment in her whole demeanour. We allowed that this was agreeable, we confessed great pleasure in her society—but we could not approve her character—it was not consistent for a Christian to be always so light-hearted. The pilgrim, the penitent, the culprit, the suppliant dependent on Almighty pity, the combatant struggling through unequal warfare, the prodigal as yet almost a stranger in his home, the meek, the mournful, and the broken-hearted—emblems by which the Deity has described his people, are characters, we said, that consist not with so much gaiety and lightness of spirits, such sanguine, cheerful, fearless animation.

There was another, on whose brow the shade of pensiveness for ever sat supreme—she seemed to be always feeling, one might have said, always suffering—if there ever came a smile on her features, it was gone ere you could be sure you saw it there—if there ever escaped from her a word of jest, the sigh came so quickly after, you felt forbidden to remark it: the liquid eye, and changeful colour, spoke intensity of feeling—but even in her feeling there was a stillness imperturbable—in her very pleasures, if she knew any, there was a tone of melancholy. Her affectionate softness we felt was lovely, her gentle sadness interesting; we could even have loved her, had we not seen her so very inconsistent. A Christian who professes, as we suppose she did, to have found a real and substantial bliss in grateful anticipation of eternal joy, ought never to be melancholy—habitual sadness, an air of habitual suffering, was not consistent with the security, and peace, and joy offered in the gospel to the believer, and professedly accepted by him.

There was a third person, whose busy, bustling, babbling nature, happily set in motion by a disposition to good, was for ever talking, and for ever doing; from sunrise to sunset she was to be seen in motion—assisting everybody, exhorting everybody, teaching everybody—sometimes laden with books to give away, sometimes with work to be done or clothes to be bestowed; her tables were strewed with tracts and baby-linen—her basket was filled with conserves and cough-mixtures—nobody could live without her assistance, nobody could die without her administration—it almost seemed that nobody could go to heaven without her guidance. The days were too short for what she had to do—the hours were not long enough for what she had to say; her busy head was always devising something—her bustling step was always pursuing something—her rapid finger was always making something—her tongue outstripped them all; and of all, good was the object, and benevolence the motive. Her name was written in every record of humanity, and sounded on every tongue, and engraven, doubtless, in many a grateful heart—but we did not like her, because she

was not, as we said, altogether consistent—while engaged so much abroad, domestic piety was overlooked—while hurried up and down in perpetual activity of benevolence, private devotion must be neglected ; there could be no time for reading or reflection ; the religion of the closet was of more avail than all this bustle, and more consistent with the genuine spirit of the gospel.

A fourth friend we had of an opposite character. She was never to be found taking part in the institutions of benevolence, or joining in public exertions for the propagation of truth. She was not known as the instructor of the ignorant, or the comforter of the afflicted ; she was not known to belong to institutions or societies ; she was very seldom heard to speak upon religion, and was very seldom seen in religious society. In private only might her piety be detected—in the peace and holiness that reigned in her family—the devotion that seemed to have its favourite dwelling in her closet—the silent study of the truth—the firm abiding by its precepts—the regulation of her temper by its laws—the tone, in short, of her whole feelings, habits, and desires, perceived though untold, betrayed rather than exhibited. It was necessary to know her intimately to perceive all this—we knew it, but it did not please us. If she was pious in heart, and devoted in private, why did she not come forward ? Why did she not join with others of like feelings, and do as they do ? It was not consistent that one who really loved the truth should be supinely indifferent about its propagation—one who really feels must talk and act, must be anxious to impart what she knows, and disclose what she enjoys : a barren and unproductive faith, so difficult to discover, and so fruitless, could not be consistent Christianity.

There was a fifth, whom birth and circumstances had accustomed to all the elegances and luxuries of life. A refined mind, a cultivated taste, and delicate habits, all conspired to make these things valuable and needful to her ; and it was evident they were valued and enjoyed. She was nice in her dress, expensive in her establishment, stylish in

the arrangements of her household. Her we condemned at once: so much indulgence and display, and care for things exterior, were not consistent with humility, self-denial, and renunciation of the world.

A sixth, who, in a station of equal elevation, and with equal means, was neglectful of appearances, homely in her habits, indifferent to the distinctions of society, whether from inclination, or from conscientious self-abasement, received from us no kinder judgment. It was not consistent in people of rank to look like housemaids, to live like peasants, to contravene the arrangements of Providence by levelling the distinctions of rank and circumstance.

These, and such as these, are but instances of our ample success in finding all our neighbours guilty of Inconsistency. In the full enjoyment of these discoveries, there came athwart me, Mr Listener, the recollection of your paper, almost forgotten, and of my wish to help you. After all our talk about Consistency, and the want of Consistency, and the beauty of Consistency, where was the idea the word had stood for? Within me, and around me, I began to search for it. In my own mind, I could find nothing like an idea upon the subject. I had applied the word so indiscriminately to such a heterogeneous multitude of things, from the careless dropping of an unweighed word to the crime of grossest malignity, it was impossible for any one definition, or any one idea, to comprehend the whole. Around me—alas! in reiterating the charge of inconsistency on others, had we not amply proved it in ourselves?



Consistency.

dès qu'on se met à négocier avec les circonstances, tout est perdu, car il n'est personne qui n'ait des circonstances. La leçon qu'il importe le plus de donner aux hommes dans ce monde, c'est de ne transiger avec aucune considération quand il s'agit du devoir.—
DE STAËL.



Y readers may, I fear, become weary of a subject that has loitered unsuccessfully through three or four papers, with no better result than that of proving, what might scarcely need a proof, that a great many people talk of what they do not understand, or reproach others with the wrongs themselves unwittingly commit. Lest this should be, I propose, like other narrators, to tack a moral to my tale, by way of conclusion, and so abandon it. My object was not, as may have seemed, to prove everybody in the wrong, but rather to exhibit the various modes of inconsistency; that, perceiving it and applying it, each one may correct their own. Some have said, Why expose the faults and inconsistencies of those whose principles are good, and bring on religion the reproach of all the inconsistencies of those who profess it? Let the shame be to the creature, and the glory to the Creator—what is good in us is his, what is evil is our own. But if it be true that these things exist, and that they are inconsistencies, shall we say—shall we leave it to others to

say for us—that what, in the careless and the earthly-minded, we should condemn as faults, in those who profess more seriousness and devotion, we can gloss over and disown? It was said of one of old, that it was easier to believe that drunkenness was not a vice than that he should be guilty of one. Far be from Christianity the adoption of so heathenish a principle! Rather say the spot is the blacker for the brightness of the surface on which it is seen—the stain the darker for the purity of the garment it pollutes: it seems so, and it is so. If we are ashamed of it, as well indeed we may, let us efface it, clean it, wipe it out—but not deny that it is there, or that it is what it seems. Christians think not themselves, they think not each other, sinless creatures. Should they desire to pass their alloy upon the world as pure and proven gold? But they say it is for the honour of religion, not their own, that they are so tenacious of the exposure of their faults. We are glad if it is so—but we would rather have this pious tenaciousness exercised in correcting the evils than in glossing them over, in lamenting than in denying them. So much, by the way, in reply to some remarks that have been made to us.

We hear of the beauty of Consistency: we repeat perpetually, because we hear it, that nothing is so beautiful as a consistent character; but what does it mean? The sinner's consistency, alas! is sin—the false heart's consistency is falsehood—the villain's consistency is villainy; but is this beautiful? It is a very common argument in the world, or rather a phrase that supplies the place of one, that it does not signify what religion a man professes, or what faith he holds, provided his conduct be consistent. Consistent with what? His errors? His perversions? That, alas! it is but too sure to be. The man who believes there is no God, is consistent when he breaks His laws, and sets His asserted power at defiance. The man who believes that there is no eternity, is consistent when he devotes himself to the things of time and sense; and is but the more consistent as he becomes more sensual. He whose perverted judgment and corrupted taste prefer the pleasures of sin to the peace of

holiness, the interests of time to the bliss of eternity, is consistent when he takes the one and leaves the other—is consistent when he commits sin, is consistent when he defends it. The basest character on earth may be a consistent one. There cannot, therefore, be a more dangerous maxim; and I name it the rather as my young friends will hear it frequently repeated by the wise and prudent of the world.

A consistent character must certainly be that which, having chosen the object of existence, employs the powers of existence to the attainment of that object; and in each particular, having formed a purpose, to do and to be what will promote that purpose. The inconsistency of the greater number of persons arises from their having conscience enough, and moral sense enough, to perceive what their object ought to be, and to determine their choice for good; while they have neither sense enough, nor virtue enough, to pursue it; and so the means and the end are for ever at variance, and the strangest inconsistencies are the result.

The world in general—I mean the decent and moral part of it, for the outlawed rioter in mischief we must leave to the full credit of his consistency—confess an end and object of existence which they do not pursue. We thus act exactly like a traveller, who, wishing to go to Greenwich, should, on reading the way-posts that directed him thither, turn off to the other hand, and proceed to London: of such a traveller we should say that either he could not read, or that he wanted understanding, or that he did not really desire to go to the place he professed to set out for. And so we may say in effect of all the inconsistencies of life and conduct—they arise in ignorance, misjudgment, or dishonesty.

I will illustrate my meaning by a few examples—not of the most important, perhaps, for it is not in great matters that we make the most mistakes—it is the familiar occurrences of daily life that make up the character and conduct of persons in ordinary life. When symptoms of physical disorder are to be cured, the cause of those symptoms must be discovered and removed: so, when discrepancies of conduct and inconsistency of character are to be corrected, the

better way is to proceed at once to the source whence they spring : we all know by experience how difficult it is to correct bad habits ; perhaps the difficulty would be lessened, if, instead of attempting to cure the manifestation of the evil, we were to descend into our hearts, see whence it arises, and subdue the disposition there. The best method of correcting our inconsistencies is to become better acquainted with our own hearts, whence all our conduct is derived. If it is with the conduct of others we have to do, whether to judge or to correct the success of our endeavours and the justness of our judgment mainly depend on looking beyond the apparent inconsistency to its cause, and ascribing it to its right source. Want of information, or a bad judgment, claim very unequal censure, as well as a very different remedy, from that which is due to dishonesty of purpose.

I know a young person to whom circumstances have given considerable control in her parents' house—she devotes time and talents to the management and education of her sisters, and says she has nothing so much at heart as their happiness and improvement. To effect this, she keeps the house in perpetual contention—she makes their wishes and tastes yield in everything to hers—she finds fault with everything they do, complains of everything that happens to interrupt her purposes, condemns everything that does not exactly meet her ideas—reasonable or unreasonable, nothing must take place in the family that does not exactly suit her convenience, and what does suit her convenience must be done at any rate. One of two things is the case—either she is dishonest in her purpose, and, while she seems to devote her time and attention to her family, she really desires nothing but the indulgence of her own self-will ; or she wants judgment to perceive that always giving herself the preference is not the way to make others good and happy ; and that the devotion of all her time, talents, and powers, to the annoying, contradicting, and molesting every one about her, is not a very consistent sort of sisterly devotion. If I were not indisposed to say anything to anybody above twenty years of age, I might just drop a hint that there are some devoted wives,

and devoted mothers, and devoted mistresses, who do exactly the same thing. Did this traveller never mean to go to Greenwich? Or, on arriving at the way-post, and reading, "To London," did she conclude that that would bring her there?

I know another who seems very anxious to be sought and beloved by her companions in society, complains perpetually that nobody cares for her and everybody neglects her, and she receives no attention and no kindness from any one. Meantime, if she sees those people whose inattention displeases her, she goes across the street to avoid meeting them: when she comes into company, she sits in dogged and sullen silence; or only speaks to declare that she hates all company, and is never happy but when she is alone, or to say something rude or impertinent to the society in general, or to some one in particular: if any offer of kindness is made her, she refuses it; if any particular attention is paid her, she attributes it to some sinister motive. Now, as I am satisfied from this lady's uneasiness that she is honest in her wish to be beloved, she must either, like the last traveller, think the way to reach her destination is to turn out of the road, or she must be unable to read, and really believes that L-o-n-d-o-n spells Greenwich—that is, she must think the way to be desired and sought in society, is to be very disagreeable, or that d-i-s-l-i-k-e-d really spells beloved, and so, with honest ignorance, takes the way to it.

A third I could point out, who desires, as I understand from herself, to improve her talents and inform her mind, that, when the transient beauty of her person shall have passed, and the zest of exterior amusements shall have passed, she may not be to others as a thing that has lost its value—to herself as one that has expended her possessions. But with ample powers and all means at command, she stands for an hour together at the fireplace, watching the reflection of the lustres—she begins to yawn at nine o'clock, and goes to bed at ten—is up, but not dressed, about the same hour in the morning—takes half-an-hour to put on her bonnet when she goes out, and another half hour when

she comes home to take it off again ; regretting the while that she has not time to improve herself. When any one about her is conversing upon serious and rational topics, she throws herself on the sofa, and shuts her eyes, because she does not understand such things—forgetful that listening she might learn. When asked her opinion, or in any way addressed upon any subject, she says she is not used to converse of such things—she is not used to express herself—she wishes she were more clever ; forgetting again it is difficult to be used to a thing one is determined not to attempt. She chooses her companions among those who are young, frivolous, and ignorant, because with those who are informed and sensible she feels herself inferior and embarrassed. In her studies and pursuits, especially reading, she does the same—she takes the lightest, the most frivolous, and the worst, because she cannot understand more solid works : she wishes she could understand them—then she should be very fond of reading. Now, really, I am at a loss how to class the inconsistency of this young lady—I am inclined to think she is not honest in her purpose—I believe that in her heart she likes London better than Greenwich—would rather be idle and frivolous, than a sensible, rational, and cultivated woman.

To ascend to higher matters, which yet affect our conduct in the smallest, there is one great source of inconsistency in the world, of which the features are too broad to be mistaken, of which the compass is wide enough to include every age, and character, and capability of human kind—the inconsistency of those who call themselves Christians and are not—who are travelling thither where they do not desire to arrive—who are going, as they say, to immortality, but neither know the road, nor ask it, nor will listen if you tell them : nay, there is not an obstacle that may oppose their progress but they put it on their path—there is not a temptation that may divert them from it but they hasten to turn after it ; whatever reminds them of their pretended destination is mournful to them, whatever brings them nearer to it is frightful. They allow the truth of everything, and feel

the importance of nothing—they admit the authority of Scripture, and deny everything it contains—they call God their Father, and would be ashamed to bear the characters of his children—they acknowledge a Deity and an eternity, and live as if there were none. I need not designate them further. What consistency can be expected from such as these?

If, then, we would be consistent, we must first see that our object and our means of pursuing it, our path and our destination, are agreed. If they are not, let us examine where the evil is. Do we want information, do we want judgment, or do we want honesty? One or the other we want assuredly.

There is a character consistent in beauty, in holiness, in perfection. The features of it have been sketched, distinct though separate, in the records of eternal truth—the whole have been conjoined, embodied, realised, in the person of the incarnate Deity. Conformity to this standard is perfection—every departure from it is an imperfection—here perfect consistency would be perfect holiness. It is a standard no man has attained—yet it is the only one consistency with which is desirable. When we seek consistency for ourselves this ought to be what we mean—when we desire consistency in others this ought to be the rule by which we judge them. But I fear, for the most part, that is not our meaning. The only lawful code of conformity is abrogated; the only real standard of excellence, consistency with which is beautiful, and every inconsistency with which is a defect, is put out of sight; while we make to ourselves each one a standard of our own, moulded in our own prejudices, our own habits, our own peculiar taste and character; and by this we measure everything, judge everything, and too frequently condemn everybody, for no better reason than because they are not like ourselves. In great things and in small things, from the important features of moral rectitude to the trifling ornaments of exterior propriety, self is our standard, and all is right or wrong, admired or condemned, as it agrees with, or departs from, this standard, this household deity, that

each one has made for himself, and fashioned to his own taste, that he may worship it. CONSISTENCY, therefore, a word that in the language of Christianity should mean conformity to our Maker's will, has come, in common language, to mean little else than conformity to the narrow ideas of the individual who uses it.



A fable.

Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us,
To see ousels as others see us !
It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
And foolish notion.

BURNS.



HE searcher after hidden wealth has sometimes found a treasure scarcely less valuable, though not the same as that he looked for. The blighted autumn leaf encloses a bud of future promise ; and the hour of disappointment is the birth-time, not seldom, of a hope more fair than that which it extinguishes. Even so do the defeats of our baffled wisdom bequeath to us a jewel of no common price—a lesson of humility, self-knowledge, and forbearance.

Such was my reflection, as, in the closing sentence of my last paper, I alluded to that self-esteem which makes to itself an idol of the things that are its own, and desires to conform to them the things of others. And I determined to make it the subject of future admonition to those who even now are setting out on the passage of life, with these Penates in their bosom ; prepared to immolate to them everything that is most lovely, most excellent, and most generous in human intercourse—justness, forbearance, concord, good-humour, kindness, liberality, affection, harmony, and peace.

An opposition of interests, each one's selfishness taking arms in defence of its own, is undoubtedly the source of much of the misery of life, and much of the contention with which it is distracted. But if we observe the various sources of disunion and disagreement that break the peace of families and the harmony of society, we shall find that opposing interests are not the only, nor perhaps the most frequent cause. We see the members of a family teasing, contradicting, and annoying one another perpetually, when all their real interests are in common : we see the members of society traducing, despising, and maligning one another, when it is the interest of all to live in sociability and peace. One very fruitful source of these disorders—but I would believe, not one that is irremediable, since a better knowledge and better government of our own hearts might surely correct it—is that self-esteem of which I spoke ; that making of our own ideas the standard of all excellence. Hear a fable :—

The beasts of the earth and the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea, were living once—I do not think it was in Noah's ark—in peaceful community together ; that is, they might have been peaceful if they would : being all fully provided, and secure in possession of their own.

But peace, it appears, was not to their mind. The reindeer, taking a walk one day to refresh himself, and being accustomed then as now to walk upon four legs, met with a heron, who, as every one knows, walks upon two. "Yonder is a fine bird," said the Reindeer to himself, "but the fellow is a blockhead ; why does he not go on as many legs as I do ?—I 'll e'en knock him over, to convince him of his mistake ;" and forthwith he ran his sturdy sides against the slender limbs of the bird ; and if he did not break them it was no fault of his.

A frolicsome colt, playing his morning gambols, happened to come up to a young bullock, entangled by his horns in a thicket, who with groans and cries, solicited assistance to release him. "By no means," said the Colt ; "it is your own fault. What need you be wearing those

things upon your head—don't you see that we have none?" and kicking up his hoofs in the poor captive's face, he galloped off.

A magpie, wishing to improve the society of the neighbourhood, sent an invitation to some blackbirds to dine with him in a certain wheat field, where, at much expense no doubt, a dinner of newly-sown corn had been provided. The blackbirds came in a full suit of black—the magpie was dressed, as usual, in black and white; which, when the blackbirds saw, great whisperings began amongst them. What a vulgar fellow!—how monstrously unfashionable!—could he not see that everybody wears black?—they wished they had not come; they gulped down the corn, half-choking with ill-humour; two of them died that night of indigestion; the rest would ever after endure the pangs of hunger rather than alight in a field where a magpie was feeding.

A certain crab, cast upon the shore by the tide, and eager to regain his native element, was walking, as was his custom, sideways to the water's edge. By the way he met with an eel in the same predicament; but he, like most other people, travelled with his head foremost. "I do not see, sir," said the Eel, "why you should refuse to conform to the customs of the world and the habits of society—therefore I will thank you to turn about, and walk like other people." The crab maintained his right to walk as he pleased, more especially, as it was the only way he could walk. The eel persisted. A quarrel ensued—meantime, the tide went out, and neither party, backward or forward, being able to reach the water, they were left to die of thirst upon the sand.

"Hear those creatures," said a pretty little Thrush, who, just finishing his morning song, had alighted on a bough that overhung a bee-hive—"would you believe they take that noise for music? The tasteless creatures! and pretend to have a concert! How I hate pretension! I will shame them into silence;—"and forthwith the thrush resumed his loudest song. The bees, however, happening to have more

taste for honey than music, a concert not in their thoughts, went buzzing on, totally unconscious of the rivalship they had excited. The Thrush grew wroth—they were actually trying to outsing him—that was not to be borne—and down he pounced upon the bees, as one by one they soared above their hive, and struck them to the ground with his beak: they trying in vain to pierce his close feathers with their sting—though some historians are of opinion he did not escape altogether unhurt.

“Pray, sir,” said a Goat to a Sheep, as they chanced to meet one day upon a narrow path of a declivity, but just wide enough to allow them to pass—“may I take the liberty of asking why you wear your hair curled, while I wear mine straight?” The Sheep, not remarkable for his reasoning powers, had no particular reason to give—it answered his purpose, and, if each was content with his own, there was no need of argument. The Goat thought otherwise—people ought to have reasons for what they do, and be able to explain the grounds of their conduct—and if they have not brains enough to discriminate, they ought to follow the example of those that have—therefore, to convince him that there was a reason why long loose hair was more advantageous than close curled wool, he should take the liberty of putting his horns into his fleece, and rolling him down the steep: which, if he had worn hair, he could not so easily have done.

It happened that a beautiful little Spaniel formed a strong attachment to a certain Rabbit he was in the habit of meeting in the beds of his master’s garden. The Rabbit felt extremely much flattered by the protection of so superior a person; but there was one subject of difference between them that was not easily to be adjusted. The Spaniel assured the Rabbit it was excessively vulgar to live upon vegetable diet—no rational creature did so—it was food only for brutes—he hoped now he had chosen the Rabbit for his friend, he would try to acquire more polite habits. The Rabbit modestly suggested that, besides that he had no teeth to masticate animal food, and possibly no organ

to digest it, he did not exactly know how he was to get it. The Spaniel generously promised to remove the latter difficulty, by sharing with him his own food—as to his teeth, if he could not masticate the meat, he might swallow it whole; it would save appearances, and nobody would know whether he digested it or not. The ambitious Rabbit, eager to place himself on an equality with his friend, and willing to imitate him in everything, most assiduously swallowed the meat the Spaniel brought him: and, if he did not enjoy his meals to the full as much as when he fed on cabbages and parsley, the idea of growing more genteel quite reconciled him to the privation. But, alas! nature prevailed, and poor Bunny died.

A Fly, who had been born and bred among his kindred, behind a drawing-room curtain, determined to go forth and see the world, and make himself better acquainted with the beings that inhabit it. On his return, he was observed to be morose and melancholy—he shut himself up in the creek of the ceiling, and could scarcely be persuaded to go out in search of necessary food. His friends, greatly concerned, questioned him upon the cause of this sadness; to which he only answered, that what he had seen of the world had so disgusted him, he was determined to have no more intercourse with it—he would rather stay in his creek and starve. His companions, who had seen nothing in society so much amiss, except a few spiders, continued to express their surprise; till the poor Fly explained that, during his recent intercourse with the world, he observed that the animals had the folly to wear their eyes in the front of their heads—of all the living creatures he had become acquainted with, there was not one besides themselves, that could see behind him—he would sooner starve in solitude than associate with creatures so senseless; and he is supposed to have died of cold soon after; because he would not go to the hearth to warm himself, lest he should meet a creature without the eyes at the back of his head.

My readers, I am sure, must feel much affected at the mournful state of society in the animal creation at that

period; at sorrows that overwhelmed alike the innocent and the guilty. I can imagine that nothing, while they read it, stays their tears from falling, but the hope that such a state of society never has existed. I cannot certainly pledge myself to the historical truth of what I have related—though it appears to me quite as probable as many things that are believed—but I can assure you, I have seen something very like it, in the state of society among certain young ladies and gentlemen of my acquaintance in various parts of the habitable earth: I say *young* ones, more especially—because it is an evil the experience and self-knowledge of increasing years tend, in some degree, to correct. But habit not unfrequently perpetuates what began in folly; which makes it the more necessary that early habits—habits to which ignorance and inexperience mostly tend—should be watched, and, as far as may be, restrained; lest, confirmed by repetition, and become insensible to ourselves, the fault remain when the excuse is gone.

Young persons ignorant of the world and mostly ignorant of themselves, receive from their parents or their governess, or from the combined circumstances of their education, a certain set of opinions, ideas, and habits—very good ones, perhaps; but confined, as the sphere in which they are collected. This set of notions is made into a standard of excellence, differing materially according to the difference of education—but every girl thinks her own standard the best, or rather the only one, for she knows no other; and she comes into society fully prepared to measure all and everything by her own set of notions. If to discover her mistake and correct it were the only results, it would be very well—the best and easiest remedy for a temporary evil—but this is not all. Censoriousness, contempt, impertinence, ill-humour, contention, and injustice, are the abundant progeny; and self-esteem is the parent of them all. Too high an opinion of ourselves, and too low an opinion of others, is the certain position assumed by a mind so conditioned—the very worst that can possibly be maintained,

for all that is most lovely and valuable in the human character.

I observe a young woman who has been brought up in a London school—she has been taught to do everything by the rules of politeness—she walks by rule, and talks by rule, and eats by rule, and thinks by rule—and she is withal a very polite young person. She goes into the country and meets persons who have had an education quite as good as her own; but they do everything as nature suggests, with the careless freedom of home and a country life. She decides at once that they are coarse and rude. She treats them with contempt, speaks of them with ridicule, and decides that it would be an outrage upon her good breeding to become their companion and friend. She is mistaken—they are neither coarse nor rude—there is more elegance very frequently in their ease than in her mannerism—more grace in their carelessness than her high polish. They have feelings as refined, and minds as well cultivated, as her own. And these, too, return her the compliment of aversion—they call her fine, affected, artificial—they think she can have no simplicity of feeling, or honesty of heart, under an exterior that betrays so much design. They are unjust too—she is not affecting anything or designing anything—her heart is as open and as true as theirs—but artificial refinement has, by education and habit, become natural to her.

Again, a girl has been brought up abroad—under skies where lighter spirits, and less thoughtful minds, and less cautious temperaments, give to the manners more ease and cheerfulness: and the feelings, from their very want of depth, acquire an appearance of more warmth and vivacity. She goes into society in England, where more thought, more feeling, more moral sensibility, encumber the mind whose intrinsic value they enhance, and give to the manners a degree of restraint, reserve, and heaviness. Now, if this young lady says these manners are disagreeable to her, she is not used to them, and cannot enjoy such society, that is very well, and she may be free to avoid it. But if she

affects contempt for her countrywomen, exults in her own superiority, fancies they are admiring in her what she desires in them; or believes that they are not ten times more agreeable to each other than she is to them, she is mistaken. They have turned the glass; and at the very moment she is rising in her own esteem, on the comparison, they are seeing her bold, flippant, heartless, imprudent, indelicate: not at all more just than herself, they attribute to character what is mere manner, or do not make allowance for circumstances in their estimate of character. Both parties seeing themselves in the other's glass, had gone away humbled, perhaps; but having looked only in their own, exalted in their own esteem, they have separated highly pleased with nothing but themselves.

Here are persons brought together by providential circumstances—they might be the happier for each other's friendship; the better for the counterbalance of each other's peculiarities; mutually improved by the very opposition of character: but they despise each other when they meet—cold civility and haughty distance ill conceal their aversion; when apart, they ridicule and traduce each other without mercy.

The woman who, with considerable natural powers, has been placed in a situation to cultivate them highly; whose taste for literary pursuits, never checked by the claims of domestic duty, or encumbered with attention to the homely necessities of existence, revels in the full delight of intellectual employment, and, while she indulges her own inclination, fulfils the wishes of those she loves, and gratifies by her improvements and talents all around her—comes in contact with some quiet, domestic girl, whom smaller powers, or smaller means, or different example, has consigned to other occupations, and other pleasures: her business is the direction of household affairs, and the plying of the indefatigable needle; her amusements, the weeding of her garden, the feeding of her canaries, or a five miles' walk in the mud: the comfort no less of those about her, the cheerful and useful assistant of her parents, the prudent

adviser of her inferiors, and the affectionate friend of her equals. What should these be to each other but objects of mutual kindness and admiration, each fulfilling her own destiny, improving the peculiar talents committed to her charge, and contributing to the happiness of those around her? And what are they to each other? The clever and accomplished woman turns her back on the useful, domestic friend; repels her friendly intimacy; wonders she wastes her time in work when she might be improving her mind; laughs at her amusements; despises her plain good sense; and, when not restrained by the civilities of society, treats her with disregard and impertinence. The other does not remain her debtor in this reckoning of mutual depreciation. She thinks women should keep their sphere—better be a good housewife than set up for a great genius—it is waste of time to be always reading—why does not her friend do something that is useful? She does not approve of learned ladies—she cannot bear *blue-stockings*—it is only for display women learn so much—it is not consistent with feminine modesty to be so much distinguished for talents and attainments.

To speak more generally of what I have thus evidenced by a few examples: Young people think every one who does not know what they happen to have been taught, is ignorant—everything they happen not to have learned, is useless—everything that is not the custom of the society in which they happen to have moved, is vulgar—every one who does not like what they happen to like, has bad taste—every one who does not feel what happens to affect them, has no heart—every one who is not employed as they are, wastes his time—every one who does not conform to their estimate of right, has no conscience—every one whose opinions are not like their own, or their mamma's, or their governess's, is mistaken. If it ended here, we might live very happily in our self-esteem; and society, if not in unanimity, might remain in peace. But it does not. We are never contented in our fancied superiority—offence is taken where it is not given, or given where it is not provoked—kindness is coldly

withheld, or rudely repulsed, or ungratefully repaid with ridicule—pain is inflicted unnecessarily, where all have of necessity enough—innocent feelings are mortified, and innocent enjoyments marred. Instead of being, as we ought to be, the variously wrought parts of one providential whole, to support, to counterbalance, to assist each other ; to communicate to others what we hold in pre-eminence ; to avail ourselves in others of what in us is deficient : it seems to be the very essence of our existence to depreciate and despise others ; while our minds become at once narrowed and inflated by admiration of our own supposed advantage ground.



egotism.

Communément le plus simple et le plus sûr est de ne jamais parler de soi ni en bien ni en mal sans besoin : l'amour propre aime mieux les injures que l'oublie et le silence.—FENELON.



NEVER pass by without attention any suggestion given verbally by a friend, or conveyed anonymously by letter. To such hints I am indebted for many of the subjects of my papers—sometimes by direct request, sometimes by the accidental expression of a wish that things were not so : and sometimes in company with my younger friends, I venture to confess my subjects are stolen from observation of habits that to themselves I am not at liberty to remark : and when this happens, when some young lady finds in my pages her own words, or her own follies, I am persuaded she reads them smiling, and without offence—even as if we told her her ribbon was untied, or her feathers about to blow away ; it had escaped her observation—she cannot see herself as others see her—the mirror once presented, she can judge of the justness of my remarks.

And as, in the hubbub of this noisy world, there is much passing that I may not hear, I am happy to let others listen, and insert with pleasure the following paper, which has my entire approbation. If I add to it some observations of my

own, it is not by way of amendment, nor because I am determined to let no one else have all the *say*. But, alas ! my young critics are so difficult to please—if the Listener happens to be shorter than usual, they say it is a fraud—if it happens to be more grave than usual, they say it is stupid—if any one but myself has listened, they say I am asleep—if it relates to men and women, forgetting they shall sometimes be men and women themselves, they say it is of no use to them. Wherefore, in the attempt, never in the records of humanity successful, at pleasing everybody, I am often induced to spoil the composition of my friends, by tacking it to something of my own.

The following paper, on a subject it has long been my intention to touch upon, needs no apology for its introduction : it refers to habits that may as well be the habits of youth as of age—indeed, if they exist in after life, it is almost certain to be because they have been indulged at its commencement.

HAS it ever happened to any but myself, to listen to I, I, I, in conversation, till, wearied with the monotony of the sound, I was fain to quarrel with the useful little word, and almost wish I could portray its hydra head, and present it in a mirror to my oracles, that they might turn away disgusted for ever with its hideous form ? If so—such will have sympathy with my tale.

I was the companion, one morning, of an invalid young lady, of rather respectable mind, and who was sufficiently recovered to take an interesting part in conversation, when her medical attendant was announced. A young gentleman entered, whom I judged to be about twenty-five ; his pleasing appearance and studious countenance attracted my attention and after the few necessary medical inquiries were dismissed, I was alert on his introduction of topics more general. I listened for some time even more than willingly, and from the wisdom of his remarks, I should certainly have given him credence for a man of reading and

of thought, and as such, should have judged he gave the preference to literary society, without the unceasing assurances of these facts from his own lips. But to convey to my readers a clearer idea of my disquiet, I will give the outline of the *closing* part of the conversation, assuring them, however, that the *preceding* discussion did more credit to the doctor's pretensions.

DR R.—Have you seen that ponderous work of Mr S.? I sat up till past midnight reading it. It is a most delightful thing; and I can never lay aside a book in the midst, when I am interested.

MISS H.—I have not seen it, but from your recommendation shall be glad to do so, particularly as in this country place I can find but little society.

DR R.—True—literary society is the charm of life: I mingle with no other (excepting indeed professionally); and then [introducing a splendid list of literati] with such men as these, one can find mental reciprocity: and I have the honour of their intimate acquaintance.

MISS H.—I have read the works of C— and of S— you have just named. What kind of man is C— in the parlour?

DR R.—Oh, quite charming! I was very intimate with him—he exceedingly regretted my leaving town—I must stay and dine with him whenever he got hold of me; and then B— and F—, they were my inseparable associates; after such companions I can scarcely have patience to listen to common talkers.

MISS H.—It is well for those who cannot find society to their taste, that there are books.

DR R.—I read constantly: I am quite a devourer of books, all books that I can obtain; I can pick something good out of all; but my time is very precious this morning, and my visit has already been extended; but when I get into an *interesting conversation*, I, I—And, thought I, as he made his retiring bow, with the *interesting subject SELF*, doctor, you are not soon weary.

I will detail one other demand on my patience from this

ill-favoured propensity ; and I would that these were isolated passages in my *listening* history : but perhaps I may have been peculiarly consociated with egotists. At all events, I know I am a great favourite with them, and that, whatever they may say about literary conversation, they always prefer my attentive ear.

I took up my abode for some time with a lady, whose habits of benevolence were extensive, and of whose true philanthropy of heart I had heard much. I expected to follow her to the alms-house, the hospital, and the garret ; and I was not disappointed ; thither she went, and for purposes the kindest and most noble ; she relieved their pressing wants, ministered consolation in the kindest tone, and gave religious instruction wherever needed. But then she kept a strict calender of all these pious visitings, and that, too, for the entertainment of her company : all were called upon to hear the history of the appalling scenes she had witnessed, the tears of gratitude that had fallen on her hands, the prayers, half articulate, that had been offered for her by the dying ; and to hear her attestations of disregard to the opposition she had to encounter in these her labours of love. Who, with such an appeal, could withhold their commendation ? I therefore, of course, as I listened again and again to the same tale to different auditors, heard many pretty complimentary speeches about magnanimity, &c ; and getting somewhat weary, I drew nearer to the lady's guests, till I actually thought I heard from one (he was a clergyman, I believe) an inward whisper, that he would like to refer his friend to the first four verses of the sixth chapter of Matthew, but that it would be unpolite. If my listening powers were too acute when I heard this, let me now lay aside my title, and, turning monitor at once, assure my young friends, if they would have their conversation listened to with pleasure, they must be economists with *self* as their subject.

ANTHEMIS.

THERE is one point on which God and man are agreed—

their hatred of Selfishness : with this only difference, that God hates it everywhere, and man hates it everywhere but in himself. There he feels it not, knows it not, and never would discover it, did not the prominence of the same quality in others come in perpetual and painful collision with it in him : and many a hard rub, and many a rude knock, must his self-love suffer, before he discovers what part of him it is that has been wounded. Amid the thousand forms that Self assumes, in its influence upon our thoughts, and words, and deeds, the least harmful it may be, but certainly not the least offensive, is that in which it affects our conversation. We have indeed, like Anthemis, listened to the I, I, I, till we have thought it the worst-sounding letter of the English alphabet ; only halting, in our opinion, between it and its compound companion, the *my, my, my*, with which it rings in everlasting change.

On behalf of the very young, we certainly have it to plead, that they know very little of anything but what is in some sense their own. If they talk of persons, it must be their parents, their brothers and sisters, because they are the only people they know—if they talk of anybody's affairs, it must be their own, because they are acquainted with no other—if of events, it must be what happens to themselves, for they hear nothing of what happens to anybody else. As soon, therefore, as children begin to converse, it is most likely to be about themselves, or something that belongs to them ; and to the rapid growing of this unwatched habit, may probably be attributed the ridiculous and offensive egotism of many persons in conversation, who, in conduct, prove that their feelings and affections are by no means self-engrossed. But the more indigenous this unsightly weed, the more need is there to prevent its growth. It has many varieties—the leaf is not always of the same shape, nor the flower of the same colour—but they are all of one genus ; and our readers, who are by this time, we trust, most excellent botanists, will have no difficulty in detecting them, however much affected by the soil they grow in. The *I's* and *my's* a lady exhibits in conversation, will bear such analogy to her character as

the wares on the stall of the bazaar bear to the trade of the vender. Or, if she have a great deal of what is called tact, she will perhaps vary the article according to the demands of the market. In fashionable life it will be *my* cousin Sir Ralph, *my* father the Earl, and *my* great-uncle the Duke—the living relatives and the departed fathers, the halls of her family, their rent-rolls, or their graves, will afford abundant *étagage* for any conversation she may have to furnish out. Among those who, having gotten into the world they know not how, are determined it shall at least be known they are there, it is *my* houses, *my* servants, *my* park, *my* gardens—or if the lady be too young to claim on her own behalf, *my* father's houses, &c. &c., will answer all the purpose. But happily for the supply of this sort of talk, rank and wealth, though very useful, are not necessary to it. Without any ostentation whatever, but merely from the habit of occupying themselves with their own individuality, some will let the company choose the subject; but be it what it may, all they have to say upon it is the *I* or the *my*—books, travel, sorrow, sickness, nature, art—no matter—it is, *I* have seen, *I* have done, *I* have been, *I* have learned, *I* have suffered, *I* have known. Whatever it be to others, the *I* is the subject to them; for they tell you nothing of the matter but their own concern with it. For example, let the city of Naples be spoken of—one will tell you what is seen there, what is done there, what happens there, and make her reflections upon all, without naming herself; you will only perceive by her knowledge and her remarks, that she has been in Naples: another will tell you how she came there, and why she went, and how long she stayed, and what she did, and what she saw; and the things themselves will appear but as accidents to the idea of Self. Some ladies I have known, who, not content with the present display of their powers, are determined to re-sell their wares at second hand; they tell you all the witty things they said to somebody yesterday, and the wise remarks they made to a certain company last night—*I* said, *I* remarked—the commodity should be valuable indeed to be thus brought to market a second time. Others there are,

who, under pretext of confidence, little complimentary, when shewn alike to all, pester people with their own affairs—before you have been two hours in their company, you are introduced to all their family, and all their family's concerns—pecuniary affairs, domestic secrets, personal feelings—a sort of bird's-eye view of everything that belongs to them, past, present, and to come: and woe to the secrets of those who may chance to have been in connexion with these egotists!—in such a view, you must needs see ten miles round.

There is an egotism of which we must speak more seriously. Faults, that in the world we laugh at, when they attain the dignity and purity of sacred things, become matter of serious regret. I speak nothing of the ostentatious display of pious and benevolent exertion, too well depicted in the sketch of Anthemis to need our further remark. We live at a time when religion, its deepest and dearest interests, have become a subject of general conversation. We would have it so—but we mark, with regret, that Self has introduced itself here. The heartless loquacity—we must say heartless, for in matters of such deep interest facility of speech bespeaks the feelings light—the unshrinking jabber with which people tell you their soul's history, their past impressions and present difficulties, their doctrines and their doubts, their manifestations and their experiences—not in the ear of confidence, to have those doubts removed, and those doctrines verified—not in the ear of anxious inquiry, to communicate knowledge and give encouragement—but anywhere, in any company, to anybody who will listen—the *I* felt, *I* thought, *I* experienced, *my* sorrows, *my* consolations. Sorrows that, if real, should blanch the cheek to think upon, mercies that enwrap all heaven in amazement, they will tell out as unconcernedly as the adventures of the morning—the voice falters not, the colour changes not, the eye falls not. And to what purpose all this personality? To get good, or do good? By no means: but that whatever subject they look upon, they always see themselves in the foreground of the picture, with every minute particular

swelled into importance, while all besides is merged in indistinctiveness.

We may be assured there is nothing so ill-bred, so *ennuy-ant*, so little entertaining, so absolutely impertinent, as this habit of talking always with reference to ourselves. For everybody has a Self of their own, to which they attach as much importance as we to ours, and see all other matters small in the comparison. The lady of rank has her castles and her ancestors—they are the foreground of her picture—there they stood when she came into being, and there they are still, in all the magnitude of near perspective; and if her estimate of their real size be not corrected by experience and good sense, she expects that others will see them as large as she does. But that will not be so. The lady of wealth has gotten her houses and lands in the foreground—these are the larger features of her landscape—titles and the castles are seen at a smaller angle. Neither lady will admire the proportions of her neighbour's drawing, should they chance to discover themselves in each other's conversation. She again, whether rich or poor, whose world is her own domesticity, sees nothing so prominent as the affairs of her nursery or her household; and perceives not that in the eyes of others her children are a set of diminutives, undistinguishable in the mass of humanity; in which that they ever existed, or that they cease to exist, is matter of equal indifference. And she who holds her mental powers in predominance, to whom the nearest objects are knowledge, and reason, and science and learning—she takes disgust at the egotism of the former three, and does not perceive that the magnitude she gives to her own pursuits, seems as ill proportioned to them as theirs to her. And if there be one who is disabused alike of all, of wealth, and rank, and learning; and, having taken just measure both of what she has and of what she has not, has placed all in the obscurity of the distance; and in nearness to her heart and pre-eminence to her contemplation, has placed the great things of eternity—right though she is, and just though her drawing be, even she should be aware that others see it not so. The shades that

overcast her landscape never hung on theirs—the sunbeam that lights it never shone on them. In time and season she must speak to them for good—but when good is not the object, she, too, must be aware of offensive egotism in speaking of joys and sorrows that they never knew, and exhibiting contempt for things that she despises, but they cannot.

It is thus that each one attributes to the objects around him, not their true and actual proportion, but a magnitude proportioned to their nearness to himself. We say not that he draws ill who does so—for to each one, things are important more or less in proportion to his own interest in them. But hence is the mischief—we forget that every one has a Self of their own, and that the constant setting forth of ours is to others preposterous, obtrusive, and ridiculous. The painter who draws a folio in the front of his picture and a castle in the distance properly draws the book the larger of the two; but he must be a fool if he therefore thinks the folio is the larger, and expects everybody else to think so too. Yet nothing wiser are we, when we suffer ourselves to be perpetually pointing to ourselves, our affairs, and our possessions, as if they were as interesting to others as they are important to us.



School Education.

If we can succeed in shewing the mother that she has left a duty unperformed towards her infant—a duty of paramount importance—yea, one of far greater consequence than those even which she so assiduously performs for its bodily comfort; if we can convince her that any of the bad passions which agitate, the evil dispositions which deform, and the vicious inclinations which degrade, the human character, are under her control, are attributable to her neglect, and may be prevented by her exertions, she will no longer be idle, she will no longer be negligent and indifferent as to the moral health of her offspring.—MOTHER'S MAGAZINE.



AS soon as the group of little creatures peep out from the nursery, everybody asks the mother how she means to educate them; and she, with maternal anxiety,

begins to inquire for the best method. For some it is determined that they have governesses, some are to be sent to school, some are to be taught by masters, and some are to get their education piecemeal, and by accident, in any way that may happen; which, I have been surprised to observe, often proves, in the end, a very good one. As to which of these modes of education is the best, volumes large and volumes many have been written; and our most partial readers would not, I believe, petition for another, even of six pages, were there not a point of view in which the subject is not, to my knowledge, sufficiently considered. There is yet room for discussion on the subject, "How should a *Christian* mother educate her children?" for it cannot be that the same answer should be given where that adjective is subjoined, and where it is omitted. It cannot be that to ends so opposite the same path should be the most direct. When a boy is to be brought up to the church, he is not sent to Sandhurst; neither, when destined to the sea, is he sent to Oxford. If, therefore, there be two masters, two services, two worlds, so distinct and separate as the Scriptures throughout describe them, there must be some difference in the mode of preparation for them. The boy sent to Sandhurst may, when he becomes a man, choose to go into the church; and the man educated at Oxford may take it into his head to go to sea; but this is not in the parents' contemplation—they have an object, and pursue the most likely means to attain it. The child of the Christian mother may turn out careless, thoughtless, unbelieving, and choose the service for which she was not designed—for genuine piety goes not by inheritance, nor of the bequest of man; but the Christian mother does not intend this, does not prepare for this bad preference. And if, at the baptismal font, she have really devoted her child to be a child of God and a servant of Christ, with ardent prayer and honest wish that the vow should be fulfilled, it is impossible her view of education, and the manner in which she calculates the advantages of the various modes of it, can be exactly the same, as if she considers that ceremony an established farce, and

would be very sorry that her child should fulfil its promises. If, therefore, I write my sentiments upon the best mode of educating girls, it is for *Christian* mothers; to them only my observations apply—for I am satisfied they cannot, in every point at least, be equally applicable to all.

Travelling, last autumn, leisurely and for amusement, in the West of England, by one of those casualties that so often give beginning to the most intimate and lasting friendship, I became acquainted with a gentleman travelling the same road, though not on the same errand—I was wandering away from my home, he was making haste to return to his. After much of that preluding sort of intercourse which usually makes the first chapter of a story so very interesting, I received an invitation to make his house one stage upon my journey, and remain a few days there, to see what was worthy of observation in the neighbourhood. I did so; and whatever I did or did not see without—for that makes nothing to my story—I was most highly satisfied with all I found within. I scarcely need draw a picture of which the original may be seen in every town or province of our happy country—the picture of domestic enjoyment and grateful prosperity. By prosperity, I do not mean Wealth revelling in her halls of luxury, amid the plenitude of unrestrained expenditure, but that secure sufficiency, which speculating avarice does not reach, and ostentatious splendour does not waste; which hundreds do enjoy, and hundreds might who do not, were their desires more reasonable, and their hearts more grateful.

If there was nothing in the residence of my friend that bespoke unlimited resources, nothing splendid or costly, it is impossible to imagine a comfort that there was not. Though not far from a large town, the extensive shrubbery that encompassed the house, and closed it from the road, gave to it a fictitious air of loneliness and seclusion, the more delightful, perhaps, that it was not a reality. My friend was a grave and sensible man, one in whose company you could not pass an hour without perceiving a mind of no common cultivation, under the immediate and habitual

influence of the strongest religious principle. His lady was cheerful, rational, it seemed to me accomplished and well-read, with remarkable kindness and simplicity of manners. Their days were spent in that sort of busy leisure, in which no one being actually compelled to do anything, has yet, in the sense of duty, a stronger impulse to activity than any necessity could supply. When the morning-bell rang for prayers, about half-a-dozen servants made their appearance, with cheerful faces, and received, in few words, the kindly instructions of their master. The breakfast hour passed in rational discourse, or the discussion of family matters; my friend went either to his study, or to some business in the town or in the country, that took up great part of his morning: the lady was occupied, as most *not idle* ladies are, with a great many different things—books, work, household affairs, the calls of friendship, and the claims of benevolence. At dinner, in the evening, whether it was in the society of a few cultivated and agreeable friends, or in the perusal of populour works, or the chat about men and things—I do not mean scandal—time passed with equal and untroubled wings, till the day's work ended as it began, in the assembling of the family to prayers; as if to forget all distinctions where all are equal, and lose, in contemplation of eternity, the factitious differences of time and circumstance. Peace, holiness, and love, had their dwelling there; nor dwelt there only for the comfort of the family themselves. There the ignorant had instruction and advice, the hungry had food, and the naked clothing. At a certain hour of the week-day, I saw the lady go out to visit establishments of charity that needed, as she told me, the personal attention of those who supported them, as persons acting for hire seldom did their duty or understood it. At a certain hour on the Sunday, I saw a number of half-grown girls assembled in her hall, to be instructed by herself. In conversation with her husband, I heard her speak of Polly Thomson and Betty Wilson, and Jemmy Butler, as if she knew all the children's characters and propensities and was making it her business to watch over their welfare day by day, check-

ing the growth of ill, and encouraging every promise of good. The gentleman took me to the schools he had established, where I observed that he called every child by its name, and spoke to it in a manner that implied a personal knowledge of its temper and condition. He sometimes talked apart with the teachers, with an earnestness that proved he did not think it enough to hire and to pay, without knowing how the duty was performed. I do not wish to write a story—imagine all the rest. Consider, for you know, how many well-beneficed clergy, many professional or independent gentlemen, many wealthy retired tradesmen, live and pass their time, and scatter blessings around them. For my part, I envied the very servants in the house: for they, even to the stable-boy, seemed objects of kindness and parental care; as if their employers held themselves responsible for their present comfort and their eternal welfare, so far as by human means either could be promoted.

It was the second evening of my visit that, sitting with my friends alone, intent on the growth of the just-lighted fire, whose gay crackling made one rejoice that the chill of an autumn evening had afforded excuse for lighting it, I remarked on what I had seen, and added—a sort of compliment that needed no sacrifice of truth—that the neighbouring poor were favoured by Providence, in that, having no children of their own, it had disposed their hearts to become the parents of all around them. The lady smiled, and asked why I thought they had no children. Certainly I had no reason to think so, except the want of a reason to think otherwise: and not immediately replying, she added, “Our two girls are gone to school for some years in London, and our boy is at Eton.” I had started a fruitful theme—a mother’s tongue will rarely wear it out. She spoke of her girl’s affections—of the tears they shed at parting—of her longing anticipation of their return. Once I interrupted her, to ask why she parted from them. “It was for their good—for the advantage of better masters—that they might mix with other girls—that they might not be without the advantages others have whose parents live more in the

world. She could not be so selfish as to deprive them of these, for the sake of sparing herself this painful separation."

I am more disposed to listen than to talk : but it passed over my mind that had I a child, to have it brought up in such a house as this, I would pay double what they pay to send theirs out of it. I had not heard there a single word I should not wish my child to hear—I had not seen a thing I should not desire her to imitate—I had not even missed a thing I should be careful for her to acquire—and the company I had met there were such as I should desire her to form connexion with. For what advantages were these children gone abroad ? I asked to whom they had committed so important a charge. My friend replied, that it had cost him much anxious care to determine where to send them—he had inquired widely, and chosen the school that seemed, from all he heard, the most desirable. In the *single interview* he had with the lady, he was much satisfied with her conversation and her account of herself. I asked permission to visit the girls on my return to London, and receive them at my house. It was granted gladly ; the father assuring me that to know them under the observation of a friend he could rely on, would be a great satisfaction, while he was too far off to watch them himself.—Why did a parent choose to be so far off ?

I returned to town, and repaired with my letters of credit to the school. I was shewn into a room, very neat, very clean, very cold—the chairs stood with their backs to the walls—they looked as if they were made to stand there—the sofa looked as if it was made to wear its handsome covering—the bright bars of the grate filled with cut paper, seemed determined on perpetual summer—the carpet beamed in vernal freshness, as if few were the footsteps privileged to tread it. Over the chimney hung a large bunch of flowers, beautifully painted ; but like no flowers that ever grew, unless it might be in Eden. By the side of them hung a crayon head—beautifully executed also, could the head and the hair have agreed upon the angle of inclination that

became them. The lady of the house appeared, and received me with much politeness. She was well dressed, and for anything I could exactly specify to the contrary, well bred. Yet I know not how it was, the first thing that came to my mind on seeing her, was the refined, elegant, sensible mother I had parted from—it was not from the resemblance certainly. She had one of those faces which the inexperienced call good-natured ; because they are round, fresh, and lively : a physiognomist does not say so. She talked much and sensibly, and very religiously—that sort of way in which people talk, whose right to be called religious has never been questioned by others, nor for a moment doubted by themselves. She passed high encomiums on her pupils, their talents and behaviour ; but wished they could forget their parents and their home—it would be better if their mother did not write so often. She then praised their previous education, and wished all her pupils were religiously brought up—some girls came there with such habits and ideas collected at home, it was scarcely possible to prevent their doing mischief to others, or to make them conform, even exteriorly, to the principles on which she educated her pupils : their parents, too, were so suspicious of religion, she was obliged to allow many things she did not approve ; and that even for the children's sake, who might else be removed, and placed where they could learn no good at all. This was true—but it reminded me of once opening a green-house window to cool some plants that would not bear the heat, by which I killed all those that had been used to it.

The pupils followed—tall delicate girls of twelve and fifteen years. The governess did not leave them with me. What, I thought can the father's friend say to the father's child, that needs be listened to ? I gave them their mother's letter—they presented it to their governess to read. What, I thought again, can a mother write to her own child, that a stranger presumes to scrutinise ? When I talked of their home, I remarked that a tear came to the eye of the elder, while an arch smile played on the face of the younger. The governess remarked it, and commanding the latter, gave a

gentle reproof to the other. I remembered what that home was, and claimed most fellowship with the feelings of the elder.

The girls came often to my house ; and it being perceived that I was confided in by the parents, I was even once or twice allowed to look in upon them at their studies. The governess, in truth, had no cause to fear inspection. Though of a rugged temper, and feelings sufficiently obtuse, she conscientiously fulfilled the duties she had engaged for. She was not the mother of her pupils—she was not pledged to be—but she was their instructress, just, careful, clever. She did not love them—how could she love a dozen fresh-comers every year, whom, at the end of it, she might never see again ? But she treated them kindly, and was anxious for their improvement. She did not know their characters —how could she when she never saw them freed from the form her presence imposed ? But she managed them upon some broad principle, and instructed them upon some mechanical system that no doubt suited all tempers and capacities. In short, there was nothing to blame : and when I compared the unfurnished rooms, and uncomfortable meals, the harsh orders, and captious replies, the slovenly dress, and not over-cleanly habits, the restraint before the governess, the rudeness in her absence, the rivalry, bitterness, jealousy, and impertinence that ever will prevail where twenty persons, young or old, are compelled, without their choice, to dwell together in perpetual competition, without the softening influence of natural affection, early habit, and united interest—when I compared all this with the elegance, the indulgence, the peace, the love, that prevaded the home of these children, doubtless the fault was mine, that I did not immediately perceive the advantages to be derived from such a change.

Talking with the girls in private, expressly for the purpose, I found how differently each one was affected by the change, according to her different character. The elder's heart was all at home. Did she like music, drawing, reading ?—She used to like it when she was at home, but she

did not now. Did she like her schoolfellows? No—one was ill-natured, another proud, another stupid. Mistrust, suspicion, dislike, feelings she could never in her home have known, were evidently among the lessons she had learned. She should wish never to know any one when she left school but her papa and mamma. The younger wanted to go home, of course—but she should not like to live always in the country. It would be so moppy to have no companions, and see nothing of the world—Miss P. had asked her to a child's ball, she wished I would ask her mamma to let her go—there could be no harm in going once to see what it was like. Did I think her mamma would let her have a pelisse like Miss B.'s?—the things they had in the country looked so old-fashioned in town! Her governess would not let her go home with Miss F., because they were what she called worldly people; but, for her part, she thought them a great deal more goodnatured and pleasant than herself, who was always talking about religion. I was to be sure to tell her mamma that she liked French now, because she had got above a whole class of ill-natured girls who used to laugh at her when she came to school; now she could pay them back again. While the one talked only of her discomforts, her wrongs, her dislikes, in a tone of discontent and ill-humour I could not but blame extremely, the other talked of her triumphs, her discoveries, and her new-waked desires, in a way that satisfied me she had learned too much. I doubted if either would be as happy when she went back, as she was before she came. Questioning them about the religious instructions and practices of the school, they said their governess took a great deal of pains about it, read plenty of prayers and plenty of sermons, and gave them very good things to learn. But it took up a great deal of their time, and was very tiresome, and most of the girls made a joke of it. The elder had found out there was no real religion but in her father's house—the younger had found out it was much better to keep one's religion to oneself, and not make a fuss about it. With respect to the manners of my young friends, which they had more especially come hither to im-

prove, the one was indifferent, inattentive, and lounging, almost to rudeness—the other was pert, confident, and fantastical; neither bore the smallest resemblance to the elegant simplicity of their mother.

I have told my story. Are all schools alike? Is a school education the only good or the only bad one? *Must* Christian mothers send their girls away from them? Are children better any where than in the best of homes? Was the personal inspection bestowed on Betty Wilson and Jemmy Butler not due to their own children?



Maternal Education.

Cornelia, taking upon her the care of her family, and the education of her children, distinguished herself by her modesty, magnanimity, and maternal affection. Her two sons she brought up with such care, that though they were, without dispute, of the noblest family, and had the best natural dispositions of any of the Romans, yet they seemed to owe their eminent virtues more to their education than to their birth.—PLUTARCH.



N returning with some seriousness to the subject of my last paper, I must again offer the apology, no fictitious one, of a particular request. It is an important subject; and though I suppose not that any tale a listener can tell, or any counsel a writer can offer, will decide the purpose of a mother in the manner of her child's education, they may awaken reflections and feelings in her bosom, that will materially affect her decisions. That all schools are not alike, I will take for granted; there are all the gradations from worst to best that are in other things. Whether a school education is the worst of all possible plans, I will leave to be decided by the wise, when I have related what befell in one of my listening excursions.

I came, no matter how, into a house of strangers. The family were of something higher rank and larger fortune than the one before described. Elegance and fashion, com-

bined, as in modern times they are, with every imaginable comfort and convenience, were the prevailing character of the establishment, and wealth and rank were adorned in it with much that is beautiful; in a worldly point of view, I may say, I saw nothing otherwise. Sir B. was engaged all day in an office of public trust, but not exclusively of the claims of humanity; for he was the first in liberality, and the first in activity, wherever good was to be done. Lady B. was certainly not much at home, and when at home was much engaged in company: yet I saw her very attentive to such domestic duties as became her station, and even more than sometimes belong to it. I heard her household orders given with great exactness and regularity. I accompanied her to the dressmaker's, and the shoemaker's, and various other makers, to provide what was necessary for her family, especially for her children, who seemed to be always first in her thoughts on these occasions. I saw her often employed in preparing comforts for the poor, and entering into minute details of charitable exertion. Altogether, she was a very elegant, refined, and amiable woman. Half her day was passed as above described, the other half in paying or receiving visits—the evening and half the night in company abroad or company at home, and the remainder, I suppose, in sleep.

I was not ignorant of the existence of children in this house; for, besides the frequent mention of them by the mother, I saw at least a dozen pour into the room after dinner, an hour at which they had better been in bed, dressed very elegantly, to be flattered, admired, and crammed; but was much concerned to know where they existed during the intervals of this periodical swarming. Lady B. was quite willing to satisfy my curiosity. She had built a nursery and a school-room in a distant part of the house, that the children might not be disturbed by the late hours of the family; she had nurses in one, and governesses in the other, the best that could be procured—that is to say, the dearest that could be purchased. When I asked why she saw so little of her children, she said it was a sacrifice she must

necessarily make for their good. When she was at home after breakfast, they were just at their studies—when she would like to take them out with her, they were just at their dinner—and when her evening commenced, they were just going to bed. She seldom went into the school-room, because the governess did not like to be interfered with. She was very anxious they should be morally and religiously educated, and thought it was much better they should see no company, and not be much seen, till they were of age to be introduced. With little difficulty I obtained permission to frequent the nursery and school-room, where the education of the family was performed and perfected, with all the secrecy of the Inquisition. A French nurse, with a strong provincial accent, was kept in the former, that, as soon as the babes could speak, they might talk French, or something as near to it as the dialect of Somersetshire is to English. That the nurse was cramming their infant minds with the idle legends and vulgar superstitions of her Catholicism—of its doctrines she knew as little as could be desired—was a matter of no consideration. Here the little creatures enjoyed for seven years the full swing of their native dispositions; except where they happened to interfere with the native dispositions of their nurses, who, next to themselves, agreed to indulge the children—coaxed, humoured, flattered, when they were wrong—reproved, checked, and scolded when they were right—and most carefully instructed to tell no tales out of the nursery of what passed in it. Children early know their interest; the happiness of these depended on their nurses, not no their parents: there was little disposition, had there been an opportunity, to disclose what they heard or saw, at the risk of offending the nurse. What they did see and hear, those mothers who leave their children to the care of servants and the company of servants' companions, but little know. At seven years old, these scions underwent transplantation, and were received to the mysteries of the school-room.

Lady B. had procured her governess as other ladies do—that is, when she wanted one, she drove to her book

seller's and asked him if he knew of one—he gave her the address of a dozen, whom he did not know—she appointed an interview, and saw them once for half an hour—asked them if they knew everything, to which they answered, “Yes”—if they gave attention to religious and moral instruction, which they did of course—if they belonged to the Church of England, which, for anything they knew to the contrary, they did also—and, finally, chose the one that asked the highest price, had lived with people of the highest rank, and said “Yes,” with the most unshrinking confidence. To this lady, with no further examination than a polite note to her last employer, politely answered in affirmatives to everything, the children were committed for the next ten years—the most unlimited monarchy existing in society—subject to no laws but those she made for herself, and broke at her pleasure—no superintendence, no resistance, no appeal—legislative, executive, judicative, all in one. The lady who held the appointment during my visit, was not more than five-and-twenty: she had passed her youth in a fashionable boarding-school, the few first years of her womanhood in the idleness of genteel life, and at twenty had been left unexpectedly to poverty and her own resources. Patronage had put her forward in a task she hated, but could not escape from—five years' experience had taught her how to perform it with the least possible inconvenience to herself and the greatest possible satisfaction to her careless or ignorant employers—her bosom, seared by her isolated condition, and soured by her fate, gave in to the melancholy narrowness of her sphere—it could only open itself in degrading gossip with the servants about family affairs, or imprudent gossip with the children about that world from which they were so anxiously excluded—its follies, its passions, its excitements, even its vices—all those secrets they were shut up here that they might not too early learn. This, however, was the evening's indulgence, or the Sunday's treat—from six in the morning to six at night, the girls were kept to work—lesson after lesson, master after master, filled the six days entire. One

hour, and not always that, if the governess happened to have a letter to write at home, these caged birds might breathe the air of heaven—that is, they might lag arm in arm, speechless and all but motionless, round and round the square in London, or the garden in the country. How the lessons were done, nobody knew, and nobody cared—not the governess, she hated the task, and only cared it should be over—not the children, for no valued approbation waited their success—not the mother, for she never interfered. A few things, indeed, it was essential to advance in—their manner, their carriage, might be observed after dinner—they might possibly be desired to play. All this was prepared for—they had ample instructions what to do, and what to say, whatever should be asked of them. The nursery lesson was re-learned in the school-room. It little affected their comfort whether their mother was pleased, but everything depended on pleasing their governess; from interest and habit, they heard and confirmed the flattering reports made, and the interesting deceptions used, in the few short interviews that took place between the mother and the governess, without any disposition to contradict them. They did not love their governess, for she was selfish and indifferent—they did not fear her, for she had too little dignity and consistency to impose respect—but it was their interest to keep her in good humour; their sole companion, guide, and confidant. Their minds took necessarily the measurement of hers; their opinions her conceits · their principles her duplicity; their knowledge her assumption · their dispositions her plausibility. It might be a little better or a little worse, or a little different without being better or worse, as the governess was changed—but whether worse or better, the careless parent never knew—she paid the salary and was content. This must be allowed a worse education than any decent school would have offered. There, at least, the eye of scrutiny can reach—there, twice at least in the twelve months, tongues are free to tell their tale—there the mind has space to expand itself, and the intellect to measure itself, and passions to punish

themselves, in the collision of disunited interest—and there, at least, experience and capability hold the reins of government. I should decide it clearly preferable—as much preferable as the King's Bench to the Bastile.

Putting away all comparison, and the depreciation of any one system of education in particular, which was not my object, I pass on to the question—*Must* parents, Christian parents, put the education of their children out of their own hands? Ought they to do it? Women of the world, women of fashion, I am aware, cannot do otherwise. Their children must get up when *they* go to bed. While they are abroad, or engaged with company at home, which is all the time they are up, somebody must have the management of their children. Their hours, their habits, their duties, if such they are, being the subjects which engross their thoughts and attention, totally disable them from taking any part in their children's education, and the best they can do is carefully to appoint another to their abdicated maternity. And in this case, the object being what it is, perhaps the education ordinarily so attained, is not inadequate to the purpose. They are preparing for the world's service. If in the highest rank of life, an advantageous marriage is avowedly the object—the purchase of their beauty, their name, their dower, or their external accomplishments. A step lower, this may be the object still, but not an avowed one to themselves; and happiness is allowed to stand by the side of wealth and name, in the reckoning of futurity. As you descend in the scale, this object loses its supremacy, and the parents educate their children for their actual, rather than their speculative, condition in the world. But still it is for the world, and the world exclusively. Of this same world, the governess may know more than the parent; she may be more apt at modern tactics: she may be fully competent to make her pupils ashamed of their father's manners, and their father's friends; and through many a mortification, and many an unchristian feeling, help them to place themselves eventually a step or two above it. In all these alike, to keep their station in

the world, or to improve it, is the primary, I may say, the only object ; and we leave it willingly to the more able and experienced to decide by what mode of education it may be best attained.

But, with the exception of some few particular cases, and such in everything there must be, I confess I see not why *Christian* mothers put from their hands the first duty of their existence : and without a necessity, I cannot perceive how it can be excusable. Its incompatibility with other duties is the usual plea. But what are these superseding claims upon a mother's time and care ? In the whole round of matronly occupation, I can admit but one—the claims of her husband ; and this is often pleaded. So far as these claims really do interfere, I would admit the full priority of this. Were it to our point, I could say much more upon the miscalculation of those ladies who withdraw themselves from the society of their husband, and put his house in perpetual discomfort and confusion, for the sake of what they are pleased to call devotion to their children ; but I have generally observed that it is the part of the nursery-maid, not of the governess, these ladies perform in preference to the duties of a wife. So far as they interfere, the latter should surely take precedence ; but there are few gentlemen so *désœuvré* as to require their wife's society always, to be always at home ; and if they are principally so, it becomes their duty, and, being Christians, as we are throughout supposing, is most likely to become their pleasure, to take an interest in their children's education also. It is not a mother's whole time that needs to be thus occupied—she is mistaken if she supposes it occupies the whole time of those to whom she commits it in her stead. At school, the mistress sees her pupils an hour or two in the day—in the private school-room, the governess is personally indeed imprisoned, but her thoughts, her feelings, and her time, have widely scattered objects. Neither, when a mother takes the direction of her children's education, is it by any means implied that she must have no assistance in the hours that her attention is necessarily withdrawn.

Domestic management is another excuse. I do not particularly pride myself on my powers of calculation, but certainly I never could understand the arithmetic of this sort of economy. The lady has charge of her family, which takes up all her time—that is, she has to order the dinner, provide the dress, direct the servants, economise the revenue—perhaps she has to make the frocks, and stitch the wristbands, and various other little matters ladies wot of. I might be charged with inexperience were I to affirm that these may be done too; but of this I am certain—a housekeeper may be hired for twenty guineas, and a needle-woman may be hired for ten—and a governess cannot be hired for a hundred, nor a good school be paid for two hundred a-year. With respect to the superior importance of the one charge to the other, need a rational being—least of all need a Christian—be taught it? Is the cutting of a frock or the shape of a bonnet of more importance than the formation of a child's mind and character, as some mothers practically declare it to be, by neglecting the one, because they have to attend to the other? Christian ladies of the present day have discovered that neither their household cares, nor the claims of their husbands, nor the demands of society, nor all united, are sufficient to occupy their whole time. Witness the schools of charity, the institutions of benevolence, the committee-rooms of societies. Have we no married women here? And, if we have, where are their children? Fifty miles off, taking their chance in a fashionable school—at home, left to the entire management of a stranger, uninterested and incompetent to the formation of their character, whatever she may be to their mere tuition. Far be it from me to express disapprobation of the above exertions—but I must think the moral, and religious, and rational education of our own children a prior duty. If it can be done for hire, hire somebody to go to the school of charity—if orders will supply the place of personal interference, send a deputy to the cottage of poverty. We know they cannot—and we act on the persuasion in everything but in the first great duty of maternal responsibility.

The last remaining excuse we hear women plead is incapacity. There may be cases—but excepting that of sickness, we confess we know not where to look for them—in which a Christian mother is incapable of educating her own children, with such assistance as she might procure, without giving the management out of her own hands. What should she desire for her children that she has not? A few accomplishments? They may be easily purchased if she can afford it—if not, they may be done without. A little more of solid, useful knowledge? *That* she may acquire, if it is necessary, or put them in a way to acquire it for themselves; or that also she may pay somebody else to teach them. She does not understand teaching, and knows not so well to manage children as those whose particular business it is? This she might know. And to what sort of persons does she defer her fancied inexperience? To the young women, for the most part, less educated than herself, as little used, and far more unwilling, to the task! who come to it to earn an uncomfortable subsistence, with little interest in it while doing, and little gain from it when done—strangers to the children, their dispositions, and their prospects—neglecting, mistaking, often opposing the parents' views and aims; or, if yielding to them, embarrassed by their inconsistency with her own. And this is equally true whether the child be educated at home or abroad. Mothers complain that governesses are so little interested in their charge, enter so little into the parents' feelings, perform so like hirelings their task. Are not these complaints unreasonable? What is the wonder that a stranger should little like the charge a mother shews no liking for?—should do distastefully what a mother shuns entirely? What should she be made of, that her heart and soul should be devoted to children whom she must part from, and probably never see again, or see them in a sphere she cannot approach—while she whose first and deepest interest it is, now and for ever, prefers to occupy herself with anything besides? It is vain to say the governess is brought up to it—it is her business; the former for the most part is not true, the latter is

her misfortune. She may be a very useful assistant to the mother, but she never, a few peculiar cases excepted, can assume her duties, or affect her cares: though she may, and often does, most conscientiously fulfil her own—that is, she does what she engaged to do; the best a stranger can do for a stranger's children.

I fear there is more behind than all these pleas. There must be something more than this that would induce the pious mother, whose heart beats in holy solicitude over the spiritual welfare of every peasant's child, to send from her own hands, from her own care, the child of her affections—to make over to another the fond claims of gratitude and affection due to the instructors of our childhood—to forego the sweetest, fondest task maternity can know; rearing, forming, maturing its own work, and watching the growth, and gathering in holy gratitude the produce of its labours. We fear that parents have not made up their minds for which world their children are to be reared, and are determined they shall be made fit for either. Should Mammon hereafter claim them, their breeding shall not disgrace his service—whereas, should the parents' God be pleased hereafter to claim the child, his grace will supply what is wanting, and subdue what is amiss. Oh, shame upon the monstrous calculation founded on the proud exactions of the one master and the forbearing pity of the other! It has been remarked that the children of religious parents turn out worse than others. If they do, this is the cause. The worldly parent is honest in his purpose, and succeeds in it. The Christian parent is not honest; he will run any risks, make any compromise, rather than forego for his children one of the factitious advantages enjoyed by the children of the world. He says—his conduct says—it is as much an object of desire to him that his children should rise in the world, shine in society, distinguish themselves in earthly pursuits, and form high connexions, as it is to others. If it is, our religion is as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal—and the sooner we give over to fret the ears of men with it the better. If the advantages of earth bear exactly the same

relative importance that they did before, we may have changed our creed, but our hearts are the same—we had better shake hands again with the world, and ask pardon for the divisions we had occasioned. We have talked of higher destinies and superior aims; and for ourselves we seemed, from satiety and weariness it may be, to have altered the objects of pursuit and the estimate of good; but begin the game again for our children; and, behold, it is no other than it was before. They must play for the same stake, and use the same means to win it, and set as high a value on it, and be taught to play for it at as high a cost, as if we did not profess to have discovered that it was not worth the having. And for its sake we must submit to place in jeopardy that rich inheritance which it is not ours indeed to secure to them—nor the other either—but it is ours to use the means for one or for the other, according as our wishes are; and as our wishes are, our endeavours most surely will be, however we may persuade ourselves eternity has our choice, while time has our cares. What portion the Disposer of all things will bestow, his wisdom and mercy must determine. His promises to parental care are great and many. They scarcely seem to have been fulfilled. Have those parental cares been honest ones? Has not the father, the mother, for the sake of some fancied external advantage, exposed her children to contamination? For a name of fashion, has she not compromised her own principles? For fear the world should reject them, has she not provoked their rejection from above?

I would be the last to neglect or undervalue any reasonable attention to external charms in education, still less any rational cultivation of the mind. We know that the world that now is, as well as that which is to come, is the Christian's inheritance—beauty, elegance, accomplishments, are the gifts of God, and therefore to be valued. But to all its season, and to all its place; and we must believe that the road to fashion and distinction in the world is not the road to Christian simplicity and truth, nor the same education promotive of both. Parents intend to secure to their chil-

dren a double advantage; but ill, for the most part, fares the undertaking. The children of fashion disown them, because they will not go all lengths in their career—the religious mistrust them, because they wear another's livery. They are not happy with the world, because they have the truths and feelings of religion in their hearts—they are not happy out of it, because it is there they are to exhibit and succeed. Brought up entirely for the world, they had been happy in it while it lasted, for their minds had been suited to their pursuits. Brought up entirely for religion, they had been happy out of it, for they had never known what its attractions are. But now the thorns are scattered on either path—of desire on the one side, of compunction on the other. And if the better part of their education eventually prevail, the other part may rivet a chain about their necks, that will make them go heavily, even to the gates of heaven.



Good Humour.

For birds are like men in their contests together,
And in questions of right can dispute for a feather.

PEACOCK AT HOME.

And trust me, dear, good humour can prevail,
When cries and flights, and screams and scolding fail.

POPE.



T was one of those splendid days before midsummer, when everything seems to have reached the perfection of beauty, and to luxuriate in the fulness of enjoyment. The leaf had blown full, but it had not faded, neither had the dust or the drought spoiled its brightness. Of the field, the hedge, the woodland, every flower had blown; but as yet they had not died—there seemed scarcely space enough in nature for the revel of their beauty. All creation teemed with increase of life, without the feeling that sometimes assimilates it with increase of suffering—a feeling of life's disproportionate supply. The character of this hour was abundance—prodigal abundance. The seed was in the grass, the berry was in the blossom, the wheat was in the blade; and the barrenness of winter was forgotten. It was evening, but there was no cold to shrink the limbs, no dews to chill the blood. Beneath the thick foliage of the underwood, over grass and flowers, where the mower had never wet his scythe, I walked as dry as if on

the artificial carpet of the drawing-room. We have not in England many such days: in the few we have, there is a concentration of delight—of luxurious ecstasy—in our sensations, that if we had them always, we could scarcely feel; but this makes not to my tale.

I was walking in such a place, at such a moment, when I observed a group of young people, busy, with no common earnestness, in making a bouquet of flowers from the wood. And much was the difficulty, and many were the dangers, they seemed disposed to encounter, to effect their purpose. If a honeysuckle, of fairer promise than those below, hung high upon the branches, long and patient were the contrivances to reach it, and great the destruction of muslin and riband that ensued. If a rosebud of deeper red than usual was caught sight of, many were the scratches endured to ravish the guarded treasure from its bed of thorns. And presently they were on their knees in the herbage, in spite of sting-nettles and thistles, to steal some more hidden treasure—it might be the sweet violet, or the pretty myosotis. From the eagerness with which these beauties were collected, and the taste with which they were chosen, I supposed the bouquet was forming for some favourite purpose.

Casting my eyes at that moment on the ground, I saw under my feet a bed of small white flowers. They too had looked down upon it, and several times their feet had trodden over it—but they had not stooped to gather any. I picked a piece—the tiny stars that formed each separate flower, of the purest and most brilliant white, arranging themselves into a head, formed a group as rich as it was delicate. The thread-like stems that supported them, the circles round it of slender leaves, minutely cut and fringed, gave such elegance and lightness to the whole, it seemed fitted to be the flower of fairyland. But a still greater charm was the exquisite perfume of the many blossoms—too delicate, like its beauty, to be perceived at a distance, but exquisite when approached. Perhaps, because I was enamoured of its charms, perhaps, because others had

neglected and despised it, I left the rose among its thorns, and the woodbine on its heights, and gathered myself a bouquet of this small flower, contemplating its beauty, and feasting on its perfume, during the remainder of my walk. My flowers died—the pure white took the hue of decay, and the perfume of the blossoms passed. With still lingering attachment, I placed the withered branches in my work-box; as they dried there, they acquired the most delightful and refreshing scent, and became themselves a treasure—one carefully collected, I have been told, by ladies in other countries, to perfume their drawers—and for weeks and months that it remained there, I found no diminution of its sweetness.

Many a time since, as I have walked the paths of society, circumstances have called back to memory my sweet wood-roffe—fenced with no thorns, armed with no stings, planted on no heights inaccessible—attainable without cost, and yet passed by, its beauty and its sweetness unperceived. And there is one thing in particular to which I have compared it. It is so despised a thing, that I scarcely know by what name I should call it, or if there is a name by which what I mean will be exactly understood. I would call it good nature, but, in the received language of society, a good-natured person means a fool—or, at best, a character that, having no prominence of feature, good or bad, that can be seized upon, is dismissed with a sentence of harmless uselessness, under the appellation of good nature. Good temper is not the thing I mean. I have seen most decidedly good tempers with a great deficiency of this quality—and I have seen it subsist where the temper, when put to trial, has proved by no means a good one. I have seen so much virtue, so much excellence, so much benevolence, subsist without it, and I have seen it pre-eminently exhibited among so much vice, that I am satisfied it is a virtue and a beauty of itself, independently of every other; and one too much neglected and too much despised. For want of a better name, I will call it good humour. In the commonest acceptation of words, when we say a person is good-

humoured, I do not think it expresses what I mean ; but when we say any one is in *good humour*, I think it does exactly. So let it be understood that by good-humoured, I mean always in a good humour.

This plant, alas ! is not, like my sweet woodroffe, indigenous in England. Whether by something in our physical formation, or by the influence of our skies, I fear it is an exotic with us, and must be cultivated with some diligence ere it will flourish. But that it will grow in England, I am sure—and that, in every bosom swayed by Christian principles, it ought to be implanted, if it is not indigenous, I am doubly sure. I have known too little of foreign society to give it as my own observation ; but from all that may be learned otherwise than by personal intercourse, I do not understand that there is any other country where people get out of humour gratuitously, and for nothing, as we do in England—and I am sure, if that is the case, it is no small inducement to seek the influence of fairer skies ; for what with our own ill-humour, and other people's ill-humour, half the pleasure of existence is destroyed—and what is worse, virtue, and piety, and truth lose half their charm—man is injured, and God is offended.

I go into a family where there is nothing external to interrupt the happiness of its members, and nothing wanting that can essentially promote it : and I find everybody as intent on making troubles, as if it were their misery to have none. At breakfast, peace is disturbed, and the blessing of abundance forgotten, because an egg is not boiled enough, though a few minutes and hot water would soon boil it more. After breakfast a walk or a ride is rendered thoroughly disagreeable, and the delights of scenery and sunshine disregarded, because no one will say whether they prefer to go up-hill or down ; though it is evident all will be dissatisfied who have not their choice. At noon, everybody begins to grunt and grumble, because the day is so hot ; which might be excused, if it would cool them. At dinner, the gentleman is out of humour, because the window is open—whereas nothing can be so easy as to get up and

shut it ; the lady is out of humour, because the butcher has served beef instead of mutton—though no one at table cares whether they eat mutton or beef ; the daughter is out of humour, because she is sitting on the wrong side of the table—though she had no reason on earth for preferring the other side, but because she is not sitting there ; the boys are out of humour, because a shower prévents them going out —though, till it began, they had not discovered that they wished to go out ; the servant is out of humour, because the bell has rung a second time before he has time to answer it the first ; the dog—the least unreasonable, as I think, of the party—is out of humour, because he has been kicked, and trodden upon, and scolded for being in the way, when he might as well be put quietly out of the way. The evening, in a family party of well-informed, accomplished, and agreeable people, did they happen to be in a good humour, could not pass otherwise than pleasantly. But here everything goes wrong. Mary is vexed because Sarah opens the instrument first. Sarah will not play, because Mary is vexed ; and Mary will not play for about the same reason—and so neither plays. Jane cannot do her work, because Anne has lost her needle, although five hundred other needles were offered to her choice, neither can she quietly leave her work undone. When one takes up a book, another pronounces it rude, disagreeable, and unsociable, to read in company—though a full half-hour has passed since any one opened their lips. If one laughs, the other is sure to wonder what there is to laugh at ; if one complains, the other is certain there can be nothing the matter. Whatever is praised, nobody else can see the merit of—though if it had first been censured, some one would have found it all perfection. It may be supposed this family are remarkably ill-natured. So far from it, there is not among them one who does not love the other most sincerely, or would hurt a hair of the other's head, to serve a selfish interest.

I go into another family, where the hand of adversity presses hard—where unaccustomed penury has abridged the indulgences, and overhanging evil saddened the bosoms, of

its inmates. I see the father come home after a day of anxious exertion for his family: and instead of being greeted with cheerfulness and smiles, to lighten his bosom of its cares, or at least to requite him for their endurance, he finds nothing but superfluous ill humour, and useless contradictions, and teasing importunities. Why this, why that, why not the other? If he wants anything, it is the only thing that cannot be had—if he complains of anything, it is the very thing that must be—he cannot put so much as his hat or his stick down, but it is in the wrong place. His wearied mind is regaled with nothing but complaints of servants, complaints of children, complaints of everything. If he tries to cheer the spirits with some pleasant communication, his own are damped by the humour with which it is received. If anxiety has made him irritable, instead of being soothed and pacified by compliance and forbearance, he is goaded afresh with idle bickerings and useless opposition—and this from a wife, from children, who in the genuine affection of their hearts, would gladly, were it possible, take the load from his bosom, and bear it all themselves.

I see the mistress of a house, a very pattern of domestic virtue, the most just, humane, well-meaning person in the universe, whose whole care in life is to do her own duty, and see that others do theirs—by a regular seasoning of ill-humour, I see her succeed in making everybody's business irksome and disagreeable. If any one comes near, they are always in the way—if they keep at a distance, they are always out of the way—if they do anything without bidding, they are too busy by half—if they wait to be bidden, they never think for themselves. If you offer her advice, she likes people to mind their own business—if nobody interferes with her, she has everything to bear alone. The very thing she lets you see she desires of you, she refuses when you offer it; and the very thing she has done to please you, she undoes as soon as she sees you are pleased with it. If you do a kindness to any one about her, she will defeat it, or empoison it; though she would have done it herself, if

you had not. Yet—for I know her well—she is not a selfish or an unfeeling woman in matters of importance—she would sacrifice her own advantage for the benefit of the meanest of her family.

I see the generous benefactor, who divides her income with the unfortunate, who looks out for sorrow that she may lessen it, and for need that she may supply it: at great expense, and, perhaps, the sacrifice of many of her superfluities, she has brought the afflicted into her house or under her protection; and day by day I see her empoison the cup she fills for them, and make bitter the bread she supplies to them, by little ill-humoured suspicions, and captious answers, and sideway remarks, and broad hints, and bywords, not one of which has the shadow of a meaning or a cause: and by perpetual wearing on a wounded spirit, the more susceptible in proportion as it is grateful, consumes the heart with useless irritation, that she might as well have left to break with the weight of its own sorrow.

I see people compelled to live together, and who would not, by the offer of a kingdom, be induced to live apart, managing matters as if the disturbing of each other's peace was the only object of their union: contending for a thousand little things that neither cares about, though, in really important matters, either has pleasure in yielding to the other. I hear many a daughter quarrel with her mother, and many a wife dispute with her husband, whether they shall go out of one door or the other, when, if she were called upon to give up house, doors, and all for her mother's or her husband's sake, she would do it without a word. And I see again, where, from necessity or choice, everything is yielded to the will of another, so much ill grace in the doing, so many bitter words and sullen looks, that more pain and provocation is given by compliance, than would be by resistance.

I know families of young people, upon whom thousands have been expended to make them agreeable, and who have taken as much pains to commend themselves to the appro-

bation of society, and the affection of each other, as their parents have taken from them : and they are the most agreeable, entertaining, affectionate young people in the universe, *when they happen to be in a good humour*. But as to any possible calculation when that may be, you might as well trust Moore's Almanac for a fine day. Never have I been able to discover, by the affinities of cause and consequence, or any other affinities, by what laws these ladies, or any other ladies, get in and out of humour. You must take your chance with them, and that but a poor one ; it is a summer-day, indeed, in which you do not find some one out of humour with something or with nothing, with each other or themselves. Then, if you are on intimacy, woe betide you !—for whatever you say is the wrong thing—whatever you propose is the disagreeable thing—whatever you ask is the impossible thing. If you are sufficiently a stranger to impose deference towards yourself, woe betide you still !—for all your amusement is to hear sisters—sisters most really attached to each other—snapping and snarling, contending and contradicting like nothing but the little growling dogs that settle all their quarrels on the pavement, to the no small annoyance of the passengers. I never join a family circle, but somebody's humour disturbs the rest. I never join a party of pleasure, but somebody's humour makes it disagreeable. These are small matters ; but it is the perpetual dropping that wears out the stone, and not the sudden shower—and it is these small frettings of ill-humour that consume the peace of our bosoms, and attaint the character of domestic happiness in England, which else has there, and perhaps there only, its full and perfect loveliness. That this propensity to ill-humour is the effect of a foggy atmosphere and a sluggish circulation, I have no doubt. But we do not abide an evil contentedly, merely because we know the cause ; rather we go more hopefully to find a cure. Whether we can help feeling out of humour, I will not be positive ; though by the habit of reflection and resistance, I think we may. That we can avoid making others feel it, I am quite positive. I know one, who, from the

languor of a consumptive habit, feels always ill and dispirited in the morning ; when asked why she never speaks at breakfast-time, she says it is, lest, under those sensations, she may speak ill-naturedly. I know one, who, from mental exertion at night, feels, for the first few hours of the day, all the languor and exhaustion of disease. Having the care of children, she never reproves them or gives them orders till the sensation goes off, because she feels that she must wait to be in a good humour herself, before she can judge of anything, much less venture a reproach. This case is more clearly physical than most—and yet it can thus be governed. I often hear ladies say in their families, “ Do not tease me to-day, for I am unwell.” I should not have the least objection to hear them say, “ Do not tease me to-day, for I am in an ill-humour”—the candour of the confession on one part, and the shame of it on the other, might put an end to ill-humour in both. That all can control their humours is certain ; because all do when there is a necessity for it. In certain companies, in the presence of those we fear, or with whom we have some purpose to effect, either the ill-humour is conquered, or it is concealed. However the venom be native in our bosom, the sting is put forth only at our pleasure—and strange as it is, we reserve it for our best and dearest—for the torment of our home, and the misery of our families.

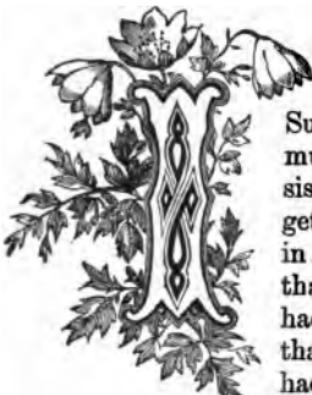
You, who in character are yet unnamed, who are fretting and toiling yourselves to be hereafter called clever women, sensible women, elegant, or accomplished, or benevolent women, has it ever come into your mind to earn the title of good-humoured women ? Perhaps not, for you use the appellation in contempt ; and yield it to those who can claim no character besides. You have heard it thus used, and you have not reflected on the term, or on the thing it means. Of this be persuaded—good humour will lighten sorrows that talent can but render more acute. Good humour will bear you through difficulties that the strongest sense cannot help you to evade. Good humour will preserve affections, beauty and elegance can do little more than win. Good

humour will lessen the sufferings of humanity more than thousands of gold and silver, which only administer to the body, while the other spares the mind. Good humour will remain a blessing when others are gone by—like the wood-roffe that was sweet in my drawer, when the rose had perished, and the woodbine was forgotten.



Good Temper and Good Humour.

Oh! blest with temper, whose unclouded ray
Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day;
Good humour only teaches charms to last,
Still makes new conquests, and maintains its past.—POPE.



AM acquainted, very intimately acquainted, with two ladies: they are cousins. I shall call them Susan and Amelia. They were so much alike that people thought them sisters. They were brought up together, and with the same prospects in life. Now, it might have happened that Good Temper, that is, Amelia, had been also good humoured—and that Good Humour, that is, Susan, had been good tempered—and there would have been an end of my story.

But the case is otherwise. Susan was not good tempered, and Amelia was not good humoured, as I am prepared to prove.

When I first knew them they were in the nursery. I often questioned the nurse respecting their dispositions; to which her answer was, "Why, ma'am, my mistress thinks—and to be sure she must know best—that Miss Amelia has the best heart at the bottom—but we all like Miss Susan best. She is very naughty, to be sure, now and then—but is not so tiresome as Miss Amelia." My own observation sufficiently illustrated her meaning. So long as

things went on in their usual way, Susan was the most pleasant child in the world. If Amelia ran to the rocking-horse before her when she was going to ride, which she always did, if she perceived the intention, she began rocking her with all her might, laughing as if that had been her first design. When something was to be divided, though the nurse owned the eldest should have the first choice, Susan would say, "Never mind, Amelia shall have which she likes"—and the air of delight with which she took what was left, proved that she really did not mind. Like most good humoured people, her compliance was pretty largely drawn upon. It was, Susan, do this, and Susan, go there—Let your cousin have that, and Help your cousin to do this. But all was good to Susan: she frisked about like a butterfly, that driven from one flower settles upon another, and loses nothing of its gaiety. All strangers liked her; for she answered cheerfully to every question put to her, smiled at everything that was said to please her; when noticed, was playful and communicative; when left alone, amused herself, and troubled nobody.

But in vain to poor Amelia things went in the usual way—the right way for her they could not go. *When* in a good humour, she was a most generous child, and would do anything to oblige another; but this did not happen once a week. "I don't like this, I don't like that—I wish you would do this—I wish you would not do that"—changing the choice more rapidly than it was possible to comply with it; and when it was complied with, not a bit the better pleased—this was the music through all the days besides. It is proverbially said of a person we need not name, that he is in a good humour when he is pleased; but this was not the case with Amelia—she was often pleased, delighted in her little heart, at having carried her point. But she took care nobody should see it, and sat pouting on, as if she had still been under contradiction. With strangers she was extremely disagreeable; if jested with, sulked, and turned away—seldom answered a question, but made a point of asking them when she saw it was inconvenient to attend to her.

The child, I thought, was detestable ; and certainly never happy.

But there came a day—I mention one—but there were many such—when outrageous noises drew me to the nursery. Susan had, in mischievous playfulness, thrown a favourite picture of Amelia's into the fire. Amelia, with her usual whine, but not meaning really to hurt her cousin—she never had been known to hurt a worm—had pushed her over a stool, and caused her a severe fall. I found Susan in an outrageous passion, screaming and stamping ; while Amelia, overwhelmed with grief for what she had done, was using every possible means to comfort and appease her. Though not in fact the aggressor, since she had no more intention of injuring her cousin, than her cousin of vexing her, she had forgotten all wrong—was begging her pardon a thousand and a thousand times, offering her dolls, books, everything she possessed, to make it up, and never even told me the provocation she had received—every thought of herself was lost in the idea that her cousin was hurt. Susan was in fact not hurt ; but she chose to scream on, and she refused all compromise and compensation. No power of persuasion or command could force her to kiss her cousin, then or throughout the day ; though poor Amelia did nothing but court and solicit her to peace. When I alluded to the picture, which I knew she felt the loss of, she answered sweetly, “ If I had burned Susan's picture, she would have laughed : and I ought to have laughed, for she only did it in fun ; and not to have pushed her down.” Susan recovered her careless good-humour to everybody else, but would not kiss or play with her cousin—and two days afterwards, seeing her in the right position for her purpose, pushed her down over the same stool.

When I knew these girls again, they were just growing into women, and beginning to take their places in society. How they had been educated, or what means had been tried to correct their faults, I know not ; but they were not corrected. The first time I met them was at a party, given by a lady something their inferior, and courting their acquaint-

ance. As it often happens in such cases, this party was not quite so agreeable as it had been meant to be. Some whose coming had been boasted about had not thought proper to appear—those who had come were some way or other not themselves, *alias, out of humour*—and, as party-giving ladies well know, all things at such times go perversely. Music was tried; and my young friends, I perceived, were looked to as leading performers. The piano proved to be out of tune. Amelia rose from it in the middle of a duet, jingled the false note to make the calamity more evident, and bring to its height the mortification and confusion of the lady; said it was impossible to play on such a thing, and sullenly resumed her seat at a distance. Susan played on with hearty good humour—made an amusement of the occasional discord—and if there came less music, there came more mirth than if the string had not broken. As notes of excuse kept arriving instead of company, Amelia grew more and more humoursome. She would do nothing she was asked—would know nothing about anything that was spoken of—yawned on purpose, and then apologized for being so rude—complained of the air of small rooms, and the stupidity of large parties—in short, took every means to expose the awkwardness and increase the embarrassment of the family. Susan was never happier in her life—saw nothing amiss, except to make it a source of amusement—set everybody at ease by being so; and made everybody happy by appearing so; exerting her powers in proportion to the want of them in others, she entertained the whole party. Let not my correspondent say she was coquetting, or shewing off. She was amongst her inferiors, whom she had not the smallest desire to attract—but she was in a good humour, and wished to make every one else so: there was no affectation in it; for if not pleased with the party, she was pleased with the intention to please her. I saw them afterwards in a different class of company. Amelia, who now could not condescend to please because *nobody* was there, was then dogged because she herself was *nobody*. She could neither laugh at a good story, nor give credit to a true one, nor shew interest in the

most interesting exhibitions of talent, wisdom, or virtue—the large room was as much too cold as the small one had been too warm ; but as nobody here cared whether Amelia was pleased or not, she had all the fruits of her ill-humour to her own share. Susan was just as happy as before, though acting a different part—she listened with as much zest as she before had talked, entering into everything with evident delight, and evinced just as much willingness to receive pleasure, as she had before done to afford it.

It may be thought Amelia's conduct arose from pride. I had proof of the contrary. With them at home, a few days after, a dispute arose. The lady of the first party had asked them to introduce her to the lady of the second party ; partly to gratify her vanity, partly to serve some essential interests. Amelia wished to consent—why not serve another when they could ? Susan was positive against it ; she was ashamed to acknowledge the acquaintance. Amelia thought this a selfish reason for refusing those who had been kind to them, particularly when they would be served as well as gratified. Susan did not wish to serve them. Why should she put herself out of the way to serve people she did not care for ? Indeed she did not like them—they behaved very ill about an affair last year, and she was glad of an opportunity of shewing them she resented it. Amelia could not bear to give them the pain of a refusal—she would go to Lady B. herself, and tell her the wishes of the D.'s and what very good sort of people they were. Susan protested she should not, or she would tell fifty things about them to Lady B., and thereupon put herself into a most formidable passion, made up of reproaches to her cousin, and vengeance on the D.'s for their presumption.

At home the same game went on perpetually. Amelia was the very torment of the house, by her perpetual peevishness. There was not one of her acquaintance liked her ; for if she liked them she would not shew it. Yet if one, any one, was in want of anything—in distress about anything—nothing to Amelia was too much trouble, or two much sacrifice. Though she would not put down her book to amuse

her best friend when present, she never was heard to utter a harsh word against her bitterest enemy when absent. Susan, on the contrary, was the very charm, and spirit, and comfort of the family. Whatever was wrong, her good humour put it right. Everybody else might be attended to first, Susan was never impatient. Praise her, she would kiss you with delight—reprove her, she would not recriminate a word—the whims and fancies of those about her were only opportunities for shewing her conciliating and self-forgetting disposition: she seemed to perceive them, only to accommodate to them as much as possible surrounding circumstances. But Susan was resentful when wronged, and implacable when offended, and selfish when any material interest was in question.

I saw these girls become wives and mothers—living in domestic prosperity under the influence of religious principle; and eventually falling into sudden adversity. Susan now knew that she was resentful, implacable, and self-interested; and she knew that these passions were deeply sinful. She knew that the favour her good humour won her from the world, was a poor equivalent for the approbation of Him who in secret beheld the obliquity of her character. Bitter indeed was her secret anguish, when she felt those tempers rising in her bosom. Ceaseless were the prayers that went up to Heaven for power to subdue them; and not less severe the struggles outwardly to restrain them. When they broke forth into action, she made, as soon as she recovered herself, every possible reparation. Meantime her house was the happiest of houses; religion seemed to be the parent of the loveliness it assumed, and nowhere was it so beloved and so admired. Servants served willingly a mistress who was sure to be pleased with their services, and patient of their faults. The husband adored a woman who, come home in what humour he would, was always in a humour to accommodate herself to his. The children—(there is nothing on earth so catching as good humour)—everybody in the house—was happy: and though now and then mamma did still go into a passion, and exhibit violent symptoms of a proud self-will,

husband and children were content to wait recovery, as the privileged possessor of cloudless skies abides the summer storm, sure to be followed by months of unbroken sunshine. And when the time of adversity arrived, while the evil spirit sunk before the humbling stroke, the gay good humour shone with treble lustre. With the same cheerfulness with which she once commanded a retinue of servants, she now did their work. If the husband missed the luxuries of his table, he never missed the smile with which he was welcomed to it. If want and disease preyed upon her frame, no one heard of it—mamma had time for everything, strength for everything, spirits for everything. The vulgarity and narrow-mindedness of those among whom she was now cast, never seemed to annoy Susan, or disgust her; and therefore her superiority never gave offence to them, though it secretly governed and guided them to good. Contrite and ashamed of her faults, Susan claimed no merit for her good humour—nor indeed was it any, for it was the gift of nature; but it was beautiful, it repaired everything to her family, it was adored by all, and the name of God had honour by her means.

Amelia had a kind husband and good children, but they could not please her—she had servants, but they would not stay with her—abundance, but she would not enjoy it—religion, but she made it unamiable. Her husband had health—she nursed him with devoted and anxious fondness when he was ill; and teased him ill again with petty annoyances, as soon as he began to recover. If she was indisposed, nobody else might enjoy their health. The children could not get through their lessons because mamma was out of humour—the servants neglected their work because mistress was cross—the friends would not accept the husband's invitations for fear madam should be in an ill humour. The poor were loaded with her bounties, and worn out of their lives with her ill-humoured interference. Providence, I hope, had thanks in secret for her abundant blessings; but there was only fretting and grumbling before men. Amelia was religious—she would have sacrificed her

dearest interest for religion ; I believe she would have gone to the stake for it. But it never came to Amelia's mind that trifling ill humours were sins. She knew she loved her fellow-creatures, and spent her life in serving them ; she loved God, and would forego any desire rather than break his laws deliberately : and she laboured incessantly to instruct and influence others to his service. Whether that she found no direct law against ill humour ; or whether that, by long-indulged habit, she had become insensible to her own fretfulness, I know not—but I have little reason to think that she prayed earnestly against it, since I never saw the effect of prayer in adequate improvement. And when poverty came, trebly embittered was the draught she mixed of it, by her querulous and fretful humour. Her husband, feeling himself the cause, though blameless, of her troubles, was wounded and heart-rent with every fresh betrayal of her selfish sensibility. Her children, the objects of her peevish anxieties and fretful cares, was discouraged, by finding themselves a source of uneasiness instead of comfort. Those among whom she was cast, falsely attributed to pride and contempt her unconciliating manners. As ungraciously as she once conferred favours, she now received them, and was thought ungrateful, as she before was thought unfeeling—though in fact she was neither. Amelia talked of the comforts of religion, expressed herself acquiescent in the will of Heaven, which I really believe she felt, but no one believed her, from the tone of whining discontent with which she spoke, and the impatience of every little contradiction or incommodity that intervened while she was speaking. Why does not religion make her happy ?—Why does not religion make her amiable ? were the questions asked by those who knew not. Those who knew were aware, that religion, beautiful ever in itself, was disguised by the peevishness of long indulged, and now, perhaps, unvanquishable ill humour. Humanity cannot say that Amelia ever injured intentionally any human being—piety cannot say Amelia disgraced her profession of it, by any act of deliberate selfishness, injustice, or inhumanity... Yet few persons, in

the sum total, ever gave more pain, or spoiled more enjoyment, than poor Amelia.

My tale is told. If it be thought Good Temper is the better character, I have no objection: one fault is not the less a fault for the discovery of a worse. My object was to illustrate the difference; not to palliate either.



Self-Examination.

Each night, ere needful slumber seal thy eyes,
Home to thy soul let these reflections rise—
How has, this day, my duty been express'd?
What have I done, omitted, or transgress'd?
GOLDEN VERSES OF PYTHAGORAS.



HAD been listening for some time without learning anything it might be useful to relate—I began to doubt whether, in this great city, there is not too much noise for my profession. In the silence of solitude I had heard the voice of truth—in the lowly hovel I had gathered the words of piety. Is nothing to be heard in London, crowded, active, bustling London? Where everything is said, done, felt, thought, it seems impossible that nothing is to be heard, except that it may be difficult to hear it. The music of the battle-field drowns the sighs the silent chamber would reveal. The busy playing of the waters conceals the rocks their stillness would betray. One advantage, at least, I determined to make of this busy season—for I remembered how many an hour I had known my young friends in the country lounge away in weariness, for want, as they told me, of something to do, particularly if it happened to rain. Could I not see who was well employed in London, and send them the welcome news? I visited, with

this view, many of my young friends in London, and found them all desperately, desperately busy. This was a real gratification to me, when to it I can add, that I found not one who was not well employed. There was great variety in their occupations, it is true—it came into my mind to wonder that a book had not ere this been written on the various kinds of bustles, with all their properties, useful, deleterious, medicinal, &c. There would be the fashionable bustle, the literary bustle, the religious bustle. They would not be all classed together—for while the one was ranked with the baleful atropus, whose venom pervades the plant throughout, the other might be classed with the fragrant hawthorn, whose spines, while they demand some caution in the handling, are but an additional beauty to the plant.

Among the many occupations of my young acquaintance, some were in the last year of education—a sort of London finishing. There was the Italian master, the German master, the drawing-master, the singing-master, the position-master ; treading each so quickly on the other's heels, that, as every girl knows who has felt it her duty to make the most of such brief and expensive advantages, there was not, between reacting the last lesson and preparing for the next, a moment's respite, from six o'clock in the morning till ten at night. Some, whose apprenticeship to learning had expired, I found commencing business on their own account. To read as many books as possible—to talk about them as much as possible—to attend as many lectures as possible—to see as many pictures, hear as much music, write as many extracts, and fill as many albums as possible, was to these the not less arduous, though voluntary service.

I have said no one was ill employed—must I recall my words, to speak of those to whom, in this first year of their appearance, the late mornings scarce sufficed to hurry from the dressmaker's to the jeweller's, and the jeweller's to the laceman's ; and the evenings scarce sufficed to dress them for the night ? Or shall we leave it to be supposed I visited none such ? I think, if there is a creature more lovely, more interesting, more engaging than every other, it is a

young Englishwoman of a certain rank, at the moment of her entrance into life. What shall we say of the hurry of dissipation, that makes of her that heartless, useless, vapid, *flétrice* thing, a woman of fashion ? Apart from all these, I found some to be equally busy with what may be considered the rational enjoyment of society, united with domestic duties in which they had newly begun to take a part, and many economical devices to preserve caste, keep up an appearance, and maintain the customary style of living.

But let not country girls believe that London girls are all employed about themselves. There are those who may be called charitably busy. These productive labourers made so many pincushions, card-racks, muffettes, and match-holders, that, to an inexperienced eye, it might seem the produce of a day would exceed the consumption of a twelve-month—but it does not prove so—and though I have heard it objected that these things are useless, it scarcely can be proved that the labour is wasted, while poverty and destitution enjoy the accumulated capital.

Again, some of the young ladies I found entering on a sort of occupation peculiar to the times—to do good, or to receive good, was their object—these, perhaps, might be more particularly termed religiously busy. And while I have distinguished these various occupations, as characterising different classes, I do not know that any one implied a neglect of the others, as far as differing circumstances made them differently necessary. I was reflecting on the probable result of this activity of employment, that seemed to characterise a London season, when, bearing a London post-mark, and seemingly written there, I received the following paper. What then ? In all this bustle somebody has time to think—to enter into their hearts, and examine, hour by hour, what passes there—to weigh their motives, scrutinise their feelings, trace out the wary deceptions of self-love, and render an account of each day's bosom secrets. I was delighted to find it so. Let us read :—

TO THE LISTENER.

MADAM,—As I have lately been listening in a region not so much frequented as many other parts of our hemisphere, I have taken the liberty of forwarding to you a few extracts of a Seven Days' Journal, if such would be interesting to your readers, having no doubt but that you will cordially unite with me in recommending even the youngest of your friends to set out speedily on a similar tour, though not to follow my example in publishing to the world what they hear.

I must seek refuge for this folly in signing myself, Madam, yours, &c.,

ARCANUM.

EXTRACTS FROM THE RECORDS OF A SEVEN DAYS' JOURNAL,
WHILE LISTENING TO THE WORLD WITHIN.

SUNDAY.—Admonition in the morning about early rising, to allow more time for private devotions. Replied to, with a promise of amendment. Suggested, whether the duties of the toilet had not better be hurried over a little, rather than the *thoughts* remain unadjusted before public worship. Replied to, with a promise of future consideration.

Resolutions formed at church, from excitement. Expire in the aisle, and buried in the churchyard. Prevents the trouble of conveying them home, or of hearing the bewailings of their kindred virtues.

Reproof about drowsiness, earlier than is usual on a weekday evening, and a comparison of energies employed in the pleasures and service of the world, and the pleasures and service of religion.

MONDAY.—Reinvigorated for accustomed pursuits by the temporary suspension of the Sabbath—busy with plans—motives investigated for benevolent proposals—some ap-

proved, some condemned, the majority questionable—so, resolve to consider more attentively the twenty-sixth verse of the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. In the evening some uneasiness from being expected to join in commendations *justly* bestowed on a lady who had offered some personal slight.

TUESDAY.—Introduce new discipline for the better regulation of the microcosm. Strictly prohibit excess of sorrow, which enervates the powers, and unfits for activity. The loss of nothing to be much bewailed in life, which would otherwise be left behind at death. Hear of secret revoltings against this statute. A test of obedience occurs, in painful bereavement. An insurrection, and the insurgents quelled by unworthy motives.

WEDNESDAY.—Plaintiveness mistaken for quiescence, till closely examined. Talk about the unsatisfactory delights of earth; detect inward whisperings at the same moment of ardent attachment. An idol dethroned some time, set up again with altered vestments—a magnanimous resolve for its entire destruction, associated with mental reservation.

THURSDAY.—Receive flattering compliments—know them to be unmerited, yet smile with complacency—think of it afterwards with utter detestation. Ponder over the disadvantages of residence, till quite dissatisfied, and think it would be better to be anywhere else. Read biography of very eminent characters of the last century, who are now but little thought about—feel mortified at the certainty of being entirely forgotten in a far less period. Close the day in a steep valley, but find the mental atmosphere somewhat healthful.

FRIDAY.—Awoke with strong sentiments in favour of truth—determine to bring everything to this standard, ere invested with importance—bring out the balances—place in first—

Posthumous Fame.—Fill the scale full—heap it up high—still goes up—so determine to care nothing for it.

Unmerited Applause.—Will not so much as lie in the balance, till the self-abasement which followed, was tied all

round it ; so have no desire for the commodity, with such an envelope.

Locality.—Here and there, found to be of equal weight in the balances.

Expectancy of Future Earthly Bliss.—This will only make weight with the past. So, set about demolishing castles—pulling down fancy pictures—leaving off wrought veils, and breaking magnifying glasses, till quite wearied, and glad that the shadows of evening invited to repose.

SATURDAY.—Soon after breakfast, receive advice to substitute the approbation of Heaven for posthumous fame—an approving conscious, for flattering compliments—contentment with residence, for desire of change—and present comforts, for future expectancies. Ask the opinion of the council-chamber, and submit it to their votes. *Judgment* is well pleased, and gives his without hesitating. *Affections* are divided—some vote for, and some against, the change. *Imagination* quite out of humour, till after a private conference with *Judgment*, then consents to be neutral for a while. *Will*, to whom it fell to give the casting vote, decided in favour—but ere the day was out, was detected in abetting the recusant *Affections* in concealing some of the old relics, and in screening the *Imagination*, who had secretly determined to secure at least one pair of magnifying glasses.—**ARCANUM.**

To the youngest and to the oldest of my readers, whether in the hubbub of a London season, or the loneliness of the sea-shore, whether fashionably, learnedly, or religiously in a bustle, I do most earnestly recommend the example of my correspondent. If any one has read the Extracts of this Journal without recognising the description of something they are familiar with, it proves that they, at least, have never travelled that road. Is it an unfrequented one ? I have sometimes feared so. I have long meditated a word on the subject, in some form or other, to my young friends; and now thank my correspondent for thus providing me with an occasion. The dangers of a wrong road are easily

enough detected ; but when the path is right—when the end is good, and the means are good, and, as far as can be seen, the motive good, who talks or dreams of danger ? Yet there is danger, imminent and fatal, to all who float upon the current of external things, without habitual intercourse and most familiar intimacy with themselves. What have I done to-day ? He was recorded a wise man of old, who daily asked himself that question ; but he was not wise enough, if that was all. What have I thought, what have I felt, to-day ? I have been too busy to think at all : and though I have felt a great deal, I have not had time to reflect upon my feelings. Then be assured, whether you have been waiting upon your own pleasure, or serving your fellow-creatures, or worshipping God, you have done too much, and must diminish your doings ere you will do anything aright. If the above picture be a just one—and it is a just one—of the human heart it is not to be trusted with the unbalanced reckoning of a single day.

I would recommend this truth to the especial acceptance of those who are just beginning the day's work of existence. A thousand ways will be presented to them, of rational, useful, pious occupation. A thousand invitations will be pressed upon them, to undertake this thing, and to assist in that. With ardent spirits and a willing mind, they will engage in everything. To an extent, every added occupation will be gain ; exercise will enlarge the powers, selfish indolence will give place to generous activity, and all the mischiefs of a mind disoccupied will be escaped. But, without some caution, they will pass this point—they will get into a bustle—they will run hither and thither in perpetual doing : till not an hour, nay, nor one fitting moment be remaining, to rest, as it were upon their oars, —to observe what way they have made, to look where the compass points, to fathom the waters they are in. Rocks, quicksands—sins unsuspected, passions uncorrected, motives unhallowed and principles unsound—will be the consequence of this self-ignorance ; and while the streams seem to,

flow so brilliant and so pure, the source will be secretly empoisoned and corrupted.

A stated time—I say a stated time, because, though I think habitual and unceasing self-examination, the examination of every feeling as it arises, of every word as it is spoken, and of every action as it is performed, would be more efficient, I know that young minds are not easily disciplined to this; and if a stated time be not set apart for self-examination, Self will for the most part go unexamined. How long a time? is a needless question—Till you have swept and garnished every corner of the house, and left no foulness in it undetected. On the day that we cannot find time enough for this, whatever our occupations have been, they have been too many; and however good they have been, we have done something more than we should have done. The close of every day naturally suggests itself as a proper season for the purpose. The day's events are then fresh upon the memory; the impressions of the last flow of feeling have not been effaced by succeeding tides; and self-justification, that subtle and ingenious thing, has not had time to weave its maze of lies.

The first best thing is, never to forget ourselves in the hurry of occupation—the next best thing is, to call back the recollection as frequently and certainly as possible. The likeness of ourselves as God beholds us, as the recording angel writes of us in heaven, is traced within us, and faithfully there only. But we prefer to look at ourselves anywhere else—to behold ourselves in any other mirror—in our external character or the opinions of those around us. If the day has been well spent, if we have been commended by those we love, if we have been assiduous in the pursuit of knowledge, successful in the pursuit of piety, active in the pursuit of benevolence, self-gratulation lulls the mind to slumber, and we write good upon that day. Meantime, perhaps, it has been the birth-time of some new corruption, the era of victory to some secret sin, the date of deep offence to the purity of that Eternal Eye before which we

each day stand—not as we are in conduct, words, and appearances external, but as we are in motives, feelings, wishes—those only things, for which we have no time to spare.

But while I thus seriously recommend the setting of the house in order, I would strongly advocate the keeping of it in order. I do not particularly admire those managers, who let everything go to wrongs on Friday, because it can be put to rights on Saturday. A mind that acts without reflection, and has recourse to after-examination of itself, may repent its ill-doings, but it cannot undo them.

I remember calling, some time ago, on a lady in the middle rank of life, who is usually very glad to see me; but on that day she was evidently very sorry to see me: the first salutation, as I entered, was an order to the servant by no means to admit anybody. It happened to be a busy day. The cause of the bustle was no affair of mine—the effects were sufficiently apparent. The crumbs of yesterday's dinner were still on the carpet—the breakfast-kettle was still hissing on the fire—the clocks had stood still for want of winding up—the fires had gone out for want of stirring—children were lurking about with their frocks un-tied—servants came to the door with paper in their hair and soap-suds on their hands—nothing that was called for could be found, because everything was out of its place—nothing that was wanted could be used, because it had not been cleaned since it was used before. I hope those of my readers who have never seen the house of a matron on a busy day, will not be offended at the comparison—but it appears to me that this is the very semblance of a mind disordered and disarranged by too much bustle.

Conversation.

Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,
Nor such as with a frown forbids the play
Of fancy, or proscribes the sounds of mirth :
Nor do we madly, like an impious world,
Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
That made them an intruder on their joys,
Start at his awful name.—COWPER.



WAS in contemplation, sitting on the dry moss that cushioned the roots of a half-perished oak-tree : surrounding me were all the beauties of the park—of one of those parks, where the interference of art has so concealed itself, that Nature seems to be the only workman. And it seemed no more to be made for man, than to be the work of man—the turf looked as if no footstep had ever pressed it—the trees as if no hand had ever pruned a bough from them—the squirrel that leaped upon their branches feared no enemy—the deer that grazed beneath were startled by no sound. From object to object wandering delightedly, not knowing for very pleasure where to rest, my eyes had been especially attracted by a tree of uncommon beauty, of which the whole trunk and branches were twined with wreaths of ivy. Its leaf, so elegantly cut, so highly glazed, had a stronger, deeper colouring, than those of the tree it hung upon. The twining curvature of the branches gracefully contrasted with the angular projections

of the boughs that supported it. The tree, enveloped in this rich drapery, seemed there but as a support to its more splendid load. I thought—A footstep on the turf broke the train of my reflections, and a woodman passed by where I was sitting ; in one hand he bore a small hatchet, with the other balanced on his shoulder a bundle of osier twigs ; from his huge leather pocket projected the handles of the hammer and the pruning knife. He passed immediately to the tree I had been admiring, and with pitiless activity began to level the hatchet at the roots of the ivy, tore it branch by branch from where it hung, and heaping it together, bound it with a thong, as if prepared for burning. It was soon done. I rose hastily, and approaching the woodman, I said, “Why have you destroyed so beautiful an object?” “Beautiful!” he answered ; “that is a growing tree—it will be worth hundreds—the ivy would soon have killed it, and made it, like itself, scarce fit for burning.” My poetic meditations took flight at this prosaic truth, and, unable to recall them, I followed the woodman, to see what other justice he was about to execute on pernicious beauty. He knew his errand, it seemed ; and over brake and brier took his long, heavy strides to a thicker and more sheltered corner of the park. Here the wood, lower and more closely planted, had been formed into a sheltered walk, and terminated in a rustic bower. The first thing that struck me was the most splendid woodbine I ever looked upon—it was not trained, it was not tied—it threw itself at random over the bushes that were about it, which it literally smothered with its golden flowers, and came again to the ground for want of something to support it. The woodman walked up to it, and began with some caution to raise the boughs. “This,” I said, “must at least be harmless here?”—“Harmless enough,” he answered me ; “but there is that holly growing up behind it. In a little time it will overhang the honeysuckle, and the dropping from the boughs will kill it. I am only going to turn its branches over that bower, where it will have sun and air, and something to support it.” I was not quite content—it looked so careless, so natural, so

beautiful, where it was—though, left there another season, it would have died.

Must that which is beautiful be removed, when it endangers something of more value than itself? Must that which in its natural growth appeared so flourishing and fair, be trained and pruned, lest it perish in its loveliness? And may we be less provident of our Master's garden, than the rude woodman of his lord's domains? May we see what is brilliant overbearing and destroying what is valuable, amuse ourselves with its attractions, and pay no regard to the effects? May we leave the residue of native beauty in our bosoms to grow as it will, and dispose of itself as it may, for the brief interval of time, when it should be trained and treasured for eternity, at whatever sacrifice of present bent and inclination?

I was led to these reflections, by a request that I would say something more than I have already said on the subject of CONVERSATION; a most important power committed by Heaven to our care, and, for the most part, suffered to luxuriate with most irregular and unchecked redundancy. The gift of Conversation is that which seems eminently to distinguish the human being from the brute, his fellow in many things, in some his superior. It is a power, too, not likely to terminate with our mortal existence; but, in whatever manner continued, must go with us to eternity, to hold celestial converse in the presence of God, and speak forth for ever the praises of his love. Of such a power it would scarcely seem necessary to urge the importance, did it not appear on observation that nobody regards it—nobody lays it to heart that God has said, “Every idle word will I bring into judgment.” When I say *nobody*, I limit my meaning to the compass within which all my listenings are made, and the sphere in which I suppose my remarks to circulate. I particularly desire it should be considered that I write for a certain class, and that I hear nothing and say nothing, and design not to censure or expose anything, that lies beyond this compass. I write for youth, or for that early womanhood on which the greater number of my

readers are just about to enter, or for those of older years who have an immediate influence on these. And as I speak only for them, so I would be understood to speak only of them, however generally I may seem to express myself. If any will take the hint for whom it is not intended—of which, in some instances, the Listener has received very gratifying testimony—I would still deprecate the feelings of those who may fancy themselves attacked, when they are not understood to be upon the field.

In speaking of the misuse, or at best the waste, habitually made of our conversational powers, I have in mind exclusively the domestic circle—the home-talk of the family, or the communications of intimacy. In company, as generally so called, it seldom rests with the young female to give the tone to the conversation—she may be accessory to its frivolity, or a sharer in its usefulness, and will be surely responsible for her own words, because she might speak better or be silent, and others' wrong will not excuse us; but it is not there that responsibility is quite her own, neither is it there that the evil is the greatest. We speak well for shame before men, while we care not for conscience how we speak before God.

When my attention had been called to this subject, I determined to listen for one day to the habitual conversation, or talk, or speech, whichever is the better word, of a family circle of very cultivated and religious young people, and to my own, as that day a member of the circle. If I had written on a tablet every word that was spoken, from the first intonation of voices giving notice to those in bed that somebody is up, to the prolonged gossip of the chamber at midnight—including the contributions of a few morning callers, and the stimulus of a chance visitor in the evening—I might submit it to perusal, and leave the comment to the judgment of the reader. This I did not—but of the purport of it all, I made very exact memoranda; and I risk no miscalculation when I assert that the sum of it was this:—a large portion were words for the utterance of which no possible motive could be found—neither the speaker nor the

hearer being interested in them, nor meaning anything, nor understanding anything by them. Another portion were of that dubious nature, that, though it would seem harsh to call them false, they wanted every character of simple, unexaggerated truth. Another part were decidedly, though not intentionally, harmful ; because they were calculated to give pain to those who heard them, or deprecate those who were the subject of them. A fourth portion of our words I found to be of a very remarkable character ; they were in exact opposition to our sentiments—expressions appropriate to a condition in which there should be no God, no Providence, no Immortality ; but, without any purpose of impugning it, in no way applicable to our actual state of existence. In the fifth division—I am sorry to say not the smallest—I placed those words of which it is said, that out of the heart the mouth speaketh ; and which proved that our hearts were not wholly occupied with that charity which is the bond of perfectness. Of these were the angry words, the proud words, the envious words, the boastful words, the impatient words, the selfish words, which did not so much belie as betray our actual meaning. And under another head, I ranged communications respecting others that had better not have been made, and the repetition of words that had better never have been spoken, much less repeated. If these portions of our conversation could not be in the mass pronounced evil, it will not be contended that any were good ; therefore the whole may be marked off as a waste of powers, and must be entirely subtracted from, if not set against the product, when the reckoning for our talents shall be required. Those who are not in the habit of self-examination, will scarcely believe, when all this has been withdrawn, how little of the use of speech remained to be examined. A few expressions of affectionate feeling and benevolent sympathy, a very little communication of intellectual enjoyment, a touch or two of innocent humour intended to please, were like beautiful blossoms scattered here and there on an ill-thriven tree. And rarer still than the flowers, when I looked for the abiding fruits of all our in-

terchange of words, they were not to be found. Of all I had spoken or heard, I could not fix upon one word by which permanent good had been done, or been even intended by the speaker—by which God had been honoured, or man benefited, or ourselves amended. Even when the most serious subjects had been alluded to, all the words might have been distributed among the preceding heads—unless we form another for that fearful license with which young people laugh, and talk, and cavil, and play off their dangerous witticisms, upon things most sacred, and persons who should be sacred for the things' sake; their hearts never misgiving them that they are not all the time talking very religiously.

It will be answered—for we would rather excuse ourselves than amend—that this careless interchange of words is all very well—it is natural and agreeable, and lightens the daily task of life—we cannot be always talking to the purpose—we need not be perpetually on the subject of religion, or making a parade of our knowledge and acquirements—talking nonsense is very agreeable, and often evinces more talent than solid discourse. To an extent this is true—and as far as it is so, we would abridge nothing of the freedom of social intercourse. The woodman did not root up all the ivy, nor turn from their native growth all the woodbines of the park. But we must take care that what is agreeable does not overbear what is permanently valuable: and that the indulgence of natural propensities does not work our destruction. Much of the talk I have described is not innocent and is not agreeable: and, instead of lightening the task of life, adds many an item to the burden's weight, and many a pang to the trial's bitterness. I have no doubt that much of our daily discourse bears the positive character of sin. Still more, not directly sinful, comes under the Apostle's warning against "foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient;" by which, I imagine, he meant not to forbid innocent mirth on right subjects and at right times, but that habitual levity of discourse that bespeaks a mind taking no responsibility for the utterance of the lips; for-

getting itself, as it were, in the intoxication of idle talk—a position “not convenient” indeed, for one prone to sin and encompassed with temptation, enlisted for battle, and in the midst of enemies. But my aim is not so much to prove that we do harm with this invaluable gift, as that we are bound to do more good with it than we do. I think we might make it more conducive to the rational and real enjoyments of life, to the general sum of human happiness, to the spiritual improvement of each other and ourselves, the credit of religion, and the glory of God. And so far as we could do this and do not, our plea of harmlessness can deserve only the reception of the servant with his buried talent.

Certainly it is not desirable to be always talking of religion. In the way in which it is too generally handled by the inconsiderate, I would rather they never talked of it. But we may talk religiously, without talking of religion—we may speak as if God were never forgotten, but as much present to our recollection, as he is actually present as a witness and observer of our words ; and so avoid every expression that consists not with our faith. As to the display that might appear in speaking always rationally, proud, vain, and selfish would be all the words spoken from such a motive : but that sort of communication which affords improvement, and gives useful information, is not necessarily a display of talent—it may be interchanged where no talent is. Fruitful in excuses, we plead that conversation is a spontaneous and uncultivated growth—the moment it should become studied, artificial, and constrained, it would lose its charm. Let us remember that this heaven-implanted flower, like every other blossom that once decked the bowers of Eden, and may some time blow again in a yet fairer garden, has had no place to grow on in the interval, but an unkept and fallow soil—and, like the produce of some fetid marsh, it may spread luxuriantly, but grows rank and worthless. It is no longer best as nature produces it. We must not root it out, and leave the place desolate—but we must enclose it, and prune it, and direct its growth, and

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mend the soil about it ; not to change its native characters, but to restore them. This is true of our feelings, our affections, and all that is within us ; and it is true of our words, which are no more than the expression of these. We would not have art take the place of nature, nor get up speeches by measure, and words by rule ; keep silence till we have something very important to say ; utter wise sentences while our hearts are foolish, and pious phrases while our thoughts are earthly, and benevolent speeches while our feelings are unkind—this would be to pick the blossoms from the fig-tree and stick them on the brier, in hope to gather fruit from it. But let us have a motive for our words, and let that motive be a good one—let us have a design in our words, and let that design be a good one—let us have a meaning in all we say, and let the meaning be a right one. Nay, so far are we from this, perhaps it would have been enough as a first step to say, Let us be convinced that our powers of speech are a gift for which we are responsible. Many of us, I doubt, have never yet had any intention of doing good by our daily domestic interchange of words—by good I mean what I have explained before—to promote happiness, give innocent pleasure, communicate desirable knowledge, cultivate kindly affection, amend the heart, or glorify God. Have we ever reflected that for this our speech was given, and habitually disposed ourselves to make this use of it ? The inquiry might soon be answered. Take a day—examine it through—what have we done with the gift ? What have we meant to do ? The answer of most days will be, We have done harm by accident—we meant to do nothing.

I speak not of those, who, under the meridian light of truth, have drunk so deeply of self-knowledge, and of self-reproof, that their thoughts and words, the misuse of talents, and the waste of powers, are among those things of which the remembrance is grievous to them, the burden is intolerable. They will not carelessly add to that grievous remembrance, and increase that intolerable burden. Their boughs have been already withered and overborne by the embraces of that earthliness which grew unchecked around them.

Their branches have enough run to waste and perished, for want of timely training and support ; and left them to perpetual, painful, and sometimes unsuccessful struggles against obstinate and deep-rooted habit. These need no persuasion ; but well might the young be persuaded by them to look early to the garden committed to their keeping.



Cousin Mabel.

He who glides smoothly o'er life's waveless sea,
Nor feels the chilling blast of misery,
Looks on the victim by the whirlwind toss'd,
And marvels how his peace was wreck'd or lost.—BIRD.



THERE is a proverbial saying of some antiquity, and not wanting in wisdom, that “listeners never hear any good of themselves.” When the motive for furtive observation is a bad one—impertinent curiosity

or designing malice—it is most probable that they will not—or, if they do, there is likely to come with the stolen commendation, an uncomfortable consciousness that they do not deserve it. But I, who listen honestly and openly in the broad light of day, and never hear anything but what everybody else has heard, and no one had any intention to conceal, I may hope to be exempted from the sentence of this proverb; and, if I should have chanced to overhear a conversation of which I was the subject, may be excused for repeating it, that proverb notwithstanding.

It was so, that once—I cannot tell how it came to be so, but it was—that a certain large house, square and white, not very far from the Regent's Park, had windows to the ground. It was at the beginning of June—June this year was very warm, therefore it was not surprising that the windows were open, though at the close of the evening, and with lights burning. A lighted chamber, filled with living figures, is an object so pictorial, no one with a painter's eye can pass it unobserved. Myself I never can—I have of this kind no greater pleasure than to creep at dusk before a row of cottages, and through an uncurtained window, by favour of an illuminated rush, or a candle of scarcely more circumference, to see the unconscious inmates perform their evening task, or enjoy their evening's idleness, mindless of observation from without: the attitudes of the rustic figures, the distinct outline with the colouring obscured, gives an effect to objects in themselves not beautiful, and by the broad daylight scarcely observable. It is true, that in a drawing-room, too gaily illuminated for any to be obscured, with patent lamps, instead of rushlights, and well-dressed ladies, instead of rude peasants and half-naked children, the painter's vision is considerably less poetic; and, on the occasion referred to, I should certainly have passed on without a pause, had not something particularly arrested my attention. About the window was a group of some half-dozen figures, purporting to be ladies somewhere in their fourth lustrum—I should think nearer the end than the beginning of it. And in the hand of one, closed, but

with the finger in, as if it had just been read, there was a little book—a sort of pamphlet-looking octavo, with a light-brownish cover, so much like some I am acquainted with, that I could not but fancy it to be the same. The ladies were in conversation very earnestly, and I fancied again it seemed to be about the book. By approaching a little, I could easily hear, for the night was still, and they spoke loud. I thought of the aforesaid proverb, and was about to go away, when looking again within, I perceived that none but *young* ladies were there. By the shadows of lesser figures in the distance, I began to apprehend it was a school, or a place of education of some sort ; extremely comfortable, as, contrary to my former observations, I must allow, it looked. This was the Listener's peculiar province. A better motive than curiosity arose. It was desirable, for my young readers' sake, that I should know the effect of my observations on their minds ; that if it had been other than I desired, I might take occasion to correct my own mistake or theirs. Certain of the goodness of my motive, and of the use to be made of what I heard, I resolved to take the risk of its not being agreeable to myself, and cautiously approached the window. The Listener was, as I had fancied, the subject of discussion : I could, of course not see the number : but I soon found it was one or other of my papers upon good humour. If I repeat anything favourable to myself, I beg my doing so may not be construed into a desire to circulate my own praises—my motive will be shortly seen. The ladies were not, as I found, quite satisfied with my definitions of good temper and good humour : some thought the terms should have been good temper and good disposition, expelling poor good humour altogether. The criticisms, however, were but few, while the papers, upon the whole, were treated with unbounded applause. The girls declared that nothing could be more natural—they had witnessed all and every of the circumstances related, even to the unboiled egg, the open window, and the kicking of the dog. What wonder, with experience of full fifteen years, and some three more to that ? One

knew an old woman who did exactly so—and one a young girl who was exactly like this—another remembered a certain party in which the very thing happened—another had the whole of her last holidays spoiled by the ill humour of her friends, and seemed not without apprehension that the next would be so too ; unless the Listener had been there before her, and carried conviction and reformation on its wing. And then came the praises. Nothing could be more desirable than to expose and ridicule such inconsistencies. They had thought at the time it was all exceedingly sinful—and that aunts, cousins, friends—for I grieve to say, contrary to what experience would lead us to expect, these ladies' strictures were becoming very personal—had shewn tempers very little consistent with Christian principles, the wisdom of age, and the suavity of youth. They thought such a one could not read the character of *Amelia*, without applying it to herself. Such a one must surely take the hint. They hoped the world would mend by it, and then they should not be annoyed as they had been. They should never see any one out of humour, without thinking of it, and longing to read it to them, that they might see themselves and be ashamed. I was extremely obliged to my friends—as how could I be otherwise ?—and so doubtless is the world, and all those whom they desired to correct by my means—particularly as the object was their own immediate benefit. I thanked them in the silence of my heart, and walked away.

In the vacation immediately following this event, I was introduced to a family, where, as a part of the domestic circle, I quickly recognised two of my *ci-devant* friends of the window—no wonder I remembered them, for they were the two that had been loudest in my praise. Certainly, had I wanted a portrait of good humour, I could not have chosen better than in these two girls. They were fresh and beautiful as the first blush of morning. Their bright blue eyes sparkled with perpetual glee—their fine elastic forms seemed equally at ease in motion and at rest—mirth played innocently on their ruby lips. I can compare them

to nothing but the first-blown rose of summer, before one drop of rain has soiled its petals. The cherished objects of parental care, surrounded with luxury, and expectant of future wealth, they seemed to live but to be loved, to breathe but to be happy.

It chanced that, in this family, besides the parents and some other inmates, there was one isolated being remarkably in contrast with the rest. She might be thirty, she might be forty or almost fifty—it did not signify—she looked as if she thought so. Her features might not have been always without interest—but in the drawn and half-shut nostril, and the close pressure of the lips, there was an expression not altogether pleasing. Green and yellow sickness was the predominant character; though in the dim, diminished eye, an acute observer might still discover what had once been vivacity and feeling. Mabel was but little past the age of her beautiful cousins, when in one day the promise of her life was blighted. Sorrow, acting upon a mind enervated by indulgence, and a constitution naturally weak, implanted the seeds of a chronic disorder, which, without immediately tending to the dissolution of life, had decided the tenor of it to be that of perpetual and remorseless sickness. When Mabel's heart became a joyless blank, she had not wherewith to fill it from above. She became fretful from disappointment, and irritable from suffering; and the world, that saw the change, but knew nothing of the cause, still further soured her temper by harshness and neglect. Now, she was a devoted Christian: and in becoming so, had become benevolent, and generally cheerful. Nobody heard Mabel complain of the early bighting of her earthly hopes, or the perpetual suffering of which she was the victim; or speak of the Providence that assigned her so hard a portion, but in terms of grateful acknowledgment. But habit had rooted in her temper what it had written on her features—she was still fretful and still irritable. This everybody saw, and everybody complained of; and nobody liked poor Mabel. The parents of this family, in which she resided, knew her story and her worth, bore with

her ill-humours, and tenderly administered to her sufferings. My young friends, I am sorry to say, shewed no such consideration. Cousin Mabel was the object of their supreme contempt, and the perpetual subject of their mirth.

As the Listener is a person perfectly unknown, the ladies had no suspicion such a one was amongst them ; and I had again to hear myself produced, quoted, and extolled, whenever the girls thought they had reason to complain of their cousin's peevishness. "I wish she was away," said Susan one day to Emily ; "she is the plague of the house. If she is ill I cannot think why she does not die. I'm sure nobody would miss her." Susan did not know that Mabel had been all that day in the abodes of misery, spending her feeble powers in giving ease and consolation to the afflicted, paid with the widow's blessing and the orphan's smiles, and many an artless prayer that her days might be prolonged. "I think," said Emily one night to Susan, "cousin Mabel is a great hypocrite. The Listener says if people are religious, they should be good-humoured. Did you observe what a fit of ill-humour she took this afternoon about nobody knows what—something I said that did not please her ? One cannot be always thinking of what one says, for fear of putting people in a fret." Emily did not know that Mabel, conscious of having sinned that day before God, by the indulgence of a fretful and impatient temper, was at that moment in tears and on her knees, imploring Heaven to subdue an evil, for which her greatest grief was that it dishonoured religion ; and entreating that her young cousins, the objects of her pious solicitude, however they might despise her for her infirmities, might not be prejudiced against religion on her account. Emily and Susan saw the exterior only. Once a-day, or twice a-day or as often as may be, they saw a look of impatience, or heard a fretful word, or were put aside from their purposes by a complaint of annoyance ; and though they neither quarrelled with their cousin nor directly opposed her—for they were thoroughly good-humoured—twenty times a-day they hurt her feelings by sideway glances, broad hints, playful annoyances, and

unnecessary trials of her temper; to amuse themselves, or, as they were pleased to say, to cure her of being so touchy. Emily and Susan thought their cousin had a selfish heart, considering only her own convenience, putting everybody out of the way because she was sick. They did not see how often Mabel's eyes were filled with tears at their remarks, when no words escaped her—how often she suffered acute pain from heat, or cold, or noise, because she would not cross their inclinations—how often, while they were playfully trying to excite her temper, her eyes were uplifted to Heaven for help to restrain it. Emily and Susan never suspected that their own hearts were selfish, when, in the enjoyment of such abundant blessings, health, strength, and spirits, limbs that had never ached, and hearts that had never known a care, they thought it not worth while to spare the feelings or study the convenience of a poor child of sorrow, blighted and withered at the first dawn of life, with nothing to support her since, and sweeten her existence now, but the love of God and the kindness of those about her. But this let me say to them, if, having so much approved of one Listener, they do me the favour to peruse another:—The being of whose temper they were so impatient, and whose religion they in consequence presumed to doubt, with her small powers and enfeebled frame, conferred more benefits on humanity in one month than they in all their years—God had more thanks for her afflictions than ever He had for their prosperity—and she, with everything mental and physical to contend against, had made more sacrifices, and put more constraint upon herself for their pleasure, than they, with everything at command, had done for hers.

Leaving these, my particular friends, to speak to others, who, I hope, may be as much so, though I do not know it—let me add, that if it be our duty, as it is, to subdue as much as possible and control our natural defects of temper, it is not less—nay it is far more—the duty of the young, the light-hearted, and the happy to bear with, and excuse, and by all means to spare, the defects of temper they per-

ceive in others. Spoiled, perhaps, by an education not of their own choosing—soured, perhaps, by injuries not of their deserving—or subjected by the hand of Heaven to some organic disease of which mind as well as body is the victim—little does the lively healthful spirit know what these may suffer from the restless humour that consumes their peace, from the disease that causes it, from the influence of external things upon their frame, and above all, from a consciousness of the wrong they are doing : Did we know what it is, after nights of sleeplessness, to arise to some charge to which, perhaps, our spirits are unequal—to find every nerve affected by the vapours of the morning—to feel every word that is spoken jar upon our senses as upon some fretted sore—to go wearily, though willingly, through the day's work, struggling in vain against the evil humours that assail us—and to lie down at night, defeated, and ashamed, and self-reproached, for the day's impatience and ill-humour—we should learn a lesson which as yet, perhaps, we know not ; and, it may be more than one ; for while we learned forbearance, and indulgence, and compassion, we should not unlikely learn more gratitude to Heaven than we ever yet have felt ; and, instead of taking merit to ourselves for what was nature's gift, be confounded and ashamed that we have used it so selfishly, and so thoughtlessly possessed it.



Sacred Music.

Then crown'd again, their golden harps they took,
Harps ever tuned, that glittering by their side
Like quivers hung, and with preamble sweet
Of charming symphony, they introduce
The charming song, and waken raptures high ;
No one except, no voice but well could join
Melodious part ; such concord is in heaven !—MILTON.

MR LISTENER,



UT a month ago, I was invited to pass a fortnight at the house of an old and valued friend of my mother's, whom I had never seen. Her letters, however, breathed the tone of true piety, and as I was informed she had, though early left a widow, brought up a son and daughters in an exemplary manner, I had very little doubt but that my visit would prove very satisfactory. When I arrived at the pleasant mansion of Mrs Rivers, I found only the female part of the family at home. I was welcomed by her and her daughters with real cordiality : I was much pleased with the lady of the house, and I thought the young ladies elegant and amiable. In the time which elapsed before dinner, they were busily engaged in working for the poor ; and I found by their conversation that they were deeply interested for the spiritual as well as temporal welfare of their poor dependents. I also discovered that they were well informed and accomplished ;

not by their quoting all the books they could remember, or by their displaying all their portfolios of drawings, but by the general rational tone of their discourse, and by the very pretty landscapes and figures of their designing which ornamented the drawing-room. After dinner had passed off, and coffee had made its appearance, a pause ensued in our conversation, when Mrs Rivers asked me if I was fond of music. On my replying in the affirmative, the two young ladies rose, and with great alacrity proposed playing to me. And while Caroline was arranging the music and pianoforte, and Laura tuning the harp, I could not forbear reflecting how often the pleasure awakened by the preparation of music, had been damped by the cold indifference of the performers, by the reluctance with which they consented, and by the ill humour frequently displayed. But nothing of this kind now alloyed my enjoyment, and, after listening to some very pretty English and Italian songs, chastely and beautifully executed, Mrs Rivers said, "Come, let us have some sacred music." The young ladies complied; and, to a common observer, it might seem as readily as they had done before; but it might be fancy, or, did I not see less of alacrity, I certainly did see a very great willingness to finish the performance. When they had retired to rest, their mother and I continued chatting. She spoke of the piety and amiability of her girls, and, with the parent's tears springing to her eyes, she gave many instances of their self-denial, their charity, and self-control. From this subject we wandered to education, and she asked me how I liked their music and singing. I answered, as in truth I might, that seldom had I heard such rich execution, tempered with such judgment and expression. "I am heartily glad to hear it," rejoined Mrs R.; "for their music, first and last, has cost me a thousand pounds, and they have practised six hours every day for many years; but I do wish they would sing a hymn at our family devotions: the servants like it, and would gladly join, if they would lead, but my daughters do not seem to like it, though I tell them they have no idea how it increases the devotion of the lower orders." The day after this conversation was Sunday,

and we went to their parish church. Like many country churches, it possessed no organ, but the girls of the Sunday-school, and a few young men and women, had been instructed by the parish clerk ; and viler squalling, miscalled singing, did I never hear. But judge of my astonishment, Mr Listener, when I saw that, though my young friends held, like most of the congregation, a hymn-book in their hands, yet there was certainly no singing on their part ; no, not even did I see a movement of the lip. At dinner, Mrs R. deeply lamented the torture which every one's ear must be subject to while hearing the singing in their church ; "But," added she, "the parish is poor, and cannot afford to pay a good instructor." I then could not forbear mentioning that the instruction of them by the young ladies might effect some reformation. To my great astonishment, they both replied that they did not think it of such importance ; that it did not signify, and that it would be a great deal of trouble. I assured them that twice or thrice a-week would fully answer the end designed, and I could not forbear saying, that no part of the worship of God could be of small importance. Mrs Rivers seconded my opinion, but they remained firm, and here the subject dropped. And when I got into the retirement of my chamber that night, I was puzzled for some time to find out the great objection to singing in church themselves, or teaching others to sing. And when I reflected on the express injunction of the apostle, and on the great help that harmony is, as Mrs R. observed, to the devotion of many, I wondered why two ladies, on whose music so much expense and pains had been bestowed, should think scorn to dedicate some part of their time and talents to the Almighty (who gave them their voice and execution), in praising him themselves, or in teaching others to praise. At last, Mr Listener, I resolved to apply to you, and resolved to ask you for a solution of my doubts ; and if you will tell me why a church is a place in which nobody with a good voice may sing, though everybody with a bad one may do their utmost to annoy and distract the congregation ; and what there is in sacred music, instantly to damp all ardour

in the performers ; and why those who could execute it with fervour, neglect, and then pay those to perform it on whose lips the sacred words become mockery and profanation, you will be doing great service to many besides

Your constant reader,

EUGENIE.

The Listener wishes these questions were more difficult to answer than they are, or that there could be any doubt of the origin of these strange discrepancies. When man was created, his person beautified, and his mind endowed, and placed in the midst of a material creation, whose yet hidden properties he was to discover and improve into sources of most exquisite delights, and instruments of exercise to his own yet unknown faculties, those personal beauties, those mental endowments, and those material properties, had all one purpose and one end—the service of God, and the happiness of man—for both were then but one, and could not be disunited. When these ends parted, and man chose himself a happiness independent of his Maker, he took to his own share these splendid gifts, these treasured materials of delight, these stores of intellect—another's workmanship—and, regardless altogether of the purpose of their creation, devoted them to his own pleasure, honour, or advantage, or what, in his corruption, he considered such. God let it be. He let his beautiful world become a prison-house of crime, and his splendid gifts the instruments of sin. With these powers that he had created for his glory and service, he let his creatures make themselves a happiness to which he was no party ; till, in the revel of possession, they found that they could do without the Giver. Time went on—the beginning was forgotten—man no more remembers how he got these powers, and for what purpose he originally had them—he finds himself in possession, calls them his, and sets about to do with them what he pleases—holds himself responsible to no one for their use, and thinks it a great mat-

ter of boast if he does no harm with them. And now, when God has returned to claim his own, and in the hearts of many has reunited those long-separated ends of existence, and taught us again that we must live for Him, and find happiness in Him, and devote ourselves to His service,—stupified by habit and misled by custom, false in our tastes and perverted in our feelings, we are slow to give back to Him the embezzled property. Some, in the confusion of their judgment, and the honesty of their purpose, throw away these splendid gifts—charge on their powers the folly they have wrought with them, and conceive it their duty to lay talents, intellect, and feeling, all aside, as parts of that vanity they are called on to forego. Others, more rational in the work of excision, and not quite so honest, take shelter in the plea of “innocency”—and finding that to maintain this plea costs them trouble enough, they will not venture on the deeper question of “utility.” And so, with all our religion, God’s service—ay, and our own happiness, too—remain defrauded of those gifts and powers that were solely destined to promote them.

Music is one of these. It must have been the gift of God. Man did not communicate to the extended wire its vibrations—man did not give to the surrounding air its undulatory motion—man did not organise the ear to such exact responsiveness, or the brain to such acute sensibility of what the ear conveys. Man could not have made music, had God not intended it. The power was his, and the gift was his—man has possession, and thinks it his own. It administers to his pleasures—it buys him applause of men—it feeds his unhallowed passions, drives away thought, and helps to make him happy, in forgetfulness of what he is and is to be. For these purposes, the worldly parent, if she finds this talent in her child, takes possession of it, expends upon it, as above described, no small portion of another talent committed to her keeping, and occupies with it a fourth, or a sixth, or an eighth part of her children’s early years—perhaps the only years that ever will be theirs—and her heart never misgives her that she has perverted the gift.

or defrauded the Giver of this talent. The Christian mother follows her example, though not with the same motive. The talent is now divested of all unhallowed purposes and dangerous effects. It is acquired without vanity, and used without ostentation. Instead of leading the young performer into company, to exhibit herself for admiration, it now contributes to make the excitement of mixed society unnecessary, by supplying her with innocent amusement at home. Never let the Listener be supposed to say a word against the use that is made, in such families, of this delightful talent—the evening recreation of a well-spent day—the home festival of domestic cheerfulness and affection—or the solace, perhaps, of some anxious, lonely hour. I believe that music stands thus in many families, entirely divested of every injurious application, and administering to one part of the Creator's purpose—the happiness of man. But I do question if it is made anywhere, so much as it might be, subservient to the other—the service and honour of the Giver—or even to the first, in the best and highest sense of the word *happiness*.

To consider at first in private, Do we not all know how difficult it is to keep God always in our thoughts, to cultivate perpetual intercourse with him in our hearts, and to have before us such an abiding sense of his presence, as to be our guardian at once from danger and from sin? To do this is the prevailing desire—at least I suppose so—of every Christian bosom; and yet, while surrounded with things sensible and earthly, it is the most difficult task we have to perform. If music is the resource of our lighter hours, might it not be the means of bringing God into our thoughts, rather than of driving him out of them by the introduction of other images? If it be the solace of our sadness, might it not better serve the purpose, by bringing, together with its soothing melody, the remembrance and images of joys yet unseen, and hopes as yet unrealised: in which, rather than in the mere physical impression of the sound upon our outward organs, the mind might forget or find a sedative for, its anxieties? Might not music, by

those who like it, be had recourse to, for these express purposes, whenever the bosom seems to need it? If music, under some of its forms, is calculated to excite the passions and intoxicate the spirits, it is, in others, eminently calculated to allay and pacify, to soften and subdue them. I believe it is capable of exercising a permanent and essential influence on the character in awakening the gentler dispositions of the mind, and putting to rest the more turbulent. I should, in this persuasion, be extremely anxious to cultivate a love of music in young people, whether they play themselves or not, and be very sorry if they shewed a dislike to it. I would make it a part of their education with this view, and lead them to this use of it. To still the stormy passions, to soothe the irritated feelings, to elevate the sensual mind, and recall to seriousness the dissipated mind, would be a use of music acceptable indeed to Him who wills nothing so much as the holiness of his creatures, and their restoration to the likeness of his spotless purity. There are many who feel music thus, and for this desire it. And, I dare say, there are more Listeners than one, who, coming into musical society after a day of hurried occupation, or anxious thoughtfulness, have hoped, amid the concord of sweet sounds, to compose their agitated spirits, and elevate their earth-bound thoughts; and by the aid of Handel or Mozart, have been very near succeeding, when a noisy Italian bravura, or a flippant French madrigal, has put an end to their hopes, and almost to their patience.

In family devotion, music might be made far more useful and delightful than it is—though I am aware that in some families it is so used. Perhaps it might be made of more importance. The younger part of the family, on whose music so much is expending, might be led to consider it as their especial care, and one of the chief objects of the instruction they are receiving. How beautiful and how invaluable, in a young mind, is the habit of referring everything they receive, or do, to some higher end than that of temporal advantage or transient gratification!

In our public service, the musical department is indeed

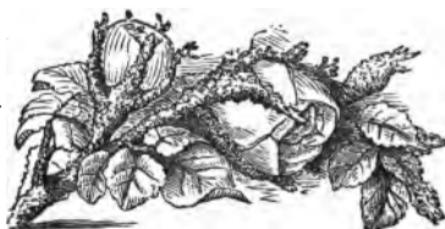
deplorable. Our psalms are solemn prayers or devout praises, as much addressed to Heaven as any part of the service. As such, it is difficult to understand why the minister is not responsible for the performance of this, as well as the remainder of the holy ministration; that it should seem to be the business of the clerk, an illiterate always, and generally not a pious man; and perhaps some dozen idlers, his companions, on whose taste and feeling is to depend this part of our devotions. The congregation may join, it is true—that is, they may if they can—but in excuse for the ladies my correspondent has censured, I must confess that, from the choice of tunes, or the method of execution, it is not always possible. I doubt not there is in every village, parish, or congregation, musical talent enough, and dearly enough purchased, to make melody meet to be offered as prayer in the courts of the Most High; to instruct those who are willing to be taught, especially the children—and why not others of the poor, their neighbours and dependants?—no unfavourable opportunity of teaching them to understand and feel this part of the service. And if, under the sanction and direction of the minister, the charge of the psalmody were thus put into their hands—of course, I do not mean the public charge, but the choice of the music—without preventing any one from joining, I think they might defy the clerk and his companions to destroy their harmony.

Perhaps our female friends will say this rests not with them—they cannot assume a charge not offered them. But my correspondent has produced a case in which they were found unwilling. I can imagine a case in which the minister, whose approbation was necessary, would be their father, or their well-known friend; or where their rank and influence in the parish would secure a glad compliance, should the proposal come from them. And then how potent is example! Successful and approved in one congregation, it would come to be earnestly solicited in another; and the ladies might, as in most cases they ought to, wait the request. But even where the direction of the singing is

not in their hands, but conducted on the present system, we still do not see how the musical ladies of a congregation could better use their expensive accomplishment, than by teaching the children of the schools, and others of the poor, to join with feeling, correctness, and moderation; by which the clerk might be even yet outsung. If I have, in these remarks, gone out of my province, they rose out of the observations of my correspondent, of which every listener in our churches must feel the justness.

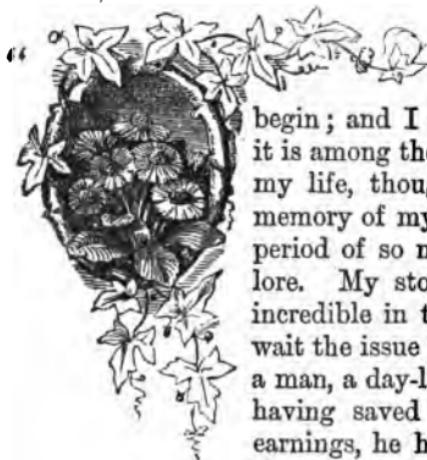
For the rest, if it be thought that I have been dreaming, instead of listening, and, mindless of what is daily before my eyes and in my ears, have let imagination range in things that have no reality; if it be said that music is an innocent plaything of man's secular taste, in which we may expend as much time as we please, and as much money as we please, and need render no account, it being only intended for our amusement: I think that such an opinion is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture, to our condition on earth, and preparation for eternity; and I believe that God will sometime vindicate his purposes in all that he has created, material or intellectual, and convince us that he gave us all the powers we have for better uses than we have made of them. When the children of Zion were captives in Babylon, they hung their harps upon the willows, and forgot their country songs—how could they sing the Lord's song in a strange land?—their hearts were unstrung and tuneless, as their harps. But when they returned to Jerusalem, doubtless they strung the chords afresh, and learned anew the forgotten music, and sang again the song that Moses taught them, the psalms their kings and prophets left them. So, should the corrupted world return to the God it has forsaken, and the knowledge of him be established in all the earth, and sin and Satan be expelled from it, this talent, and every other, will find the use for which it was intended—will be made to subserve the holiness, as well as the happiness, of man; and, before all things, the glory and worship of the Lord. How shall we think

then, of the long misuse? Or, if we never see a time when the earth shall be the Lord's, and the fulness of beauty with which he filled it be recovered from corruption, should we not as individuals, restored ourselves, endeavour to restore everything to the holy purpose of its first creation?



Goodman Hodge.

The actions of men are oftener determined by their characters than by their interest ; their conduct takes its colour more from their acquired tastes, inclinations, and habits, than from a deliberate regard to their greatest good The actions of each day are, for the most part, links which follow each other in the chain of custom. Hence the great effort of practical wisdom is to imbue the mind with right tastes, affections, and habits ; the elements of character, and masters of action.



ONCE on a time"—this is the way stories used to begin ; and I am partial to it, because it is among the remotest recollections of my life, though I scarcely expect the memory of my readers will extend to a period of so much rudeness in nursery lore. My story is truth—if it seems incredible in the reading, let judgment wait the issue for the proof. There was a man, a day-labourer he had been ; but having saved a little money from his earnings, he had now a tiny cottage of his own. Ambition, like many other things, enlarges in the feeding ; and for ten years past, his enjoyment of the cottage had been disturbed by desire for a field that lay beside it. The time came—the savings amounted to exactly the right sum, and the goodman bought the field. It was at this time I became acquainted with

him, because, in some of my listening excursions, my path lay through this ground ; and aware of the importance of the business on which I was intent, he never objected to let me pass. If I heard anything by the way, it was but consistent with my profession ; and if I tell what I heard, it is for others' benefit, not for the goodman's wrong. It was a small stony field : it had produced nothing yet, and did not look as if it intended it. One day, as I passed, I asked the goodman what he meant to plant. He said, "it was to grow wheat by and by ; but being fallow ground it would want a good deal of cultivating ; it would be some time first :" and so indeed I thought—more particularly as the goodman had expended all his substance in purchase of the field, and had not money left to buy a load of manure, or scarcely a spade to dig it. He did dig it, however, for I saw him often at the work : whether he sowed it I cannot say,—most likely not, for nothing came up. Possession, still, is great enjoyment ; as every one knows, who has property that makes no returns ; and for the first year my goodman was quite happy in the consciousness of having a field. At the beginning of the second year, seeing him stand thoughtful on the path, "Friend," I said, "do you sow your field this year?"—"Why, likely I might," he answered, "otherwise, than that I have nothing to sow it with—and it would be lost grain, besides—the ground is not rich enough for corn—in a few years I shall be able to buy manure for it—then you shall see a crop !" and the goodman's eye lightened at the thought of garnerfuls to come. It was during the same summer, that passing through the ground, a scene of unusual activity presented itself—man, wife, and child, all were in the field, and all were busy. "What now, good friend ?" I said ; "this is no month for sowing corn ; and I cannot say your lapful looks like it." Hodge answered—"It is ill sowing corn upon a fallow field—but I am tired of looking at it as it is. Till the time that I can make it useful, I have a mind to make it pretty ; and so we are planting it all over with these thistles."—"Thistles !" I exclaimed. "Why, yes," said Hodge, with the look of a man who had

solid reasoning on his side—"I was walking the other day, upon the common, thinking as one may do, upon my fallow field, and how much money I wanted of enough to buy manure for it, when my eye was taken by some tall red flowers, growing in plenty on the waste. They looked very beautiful. The fine broad leaves lay gracefully folded upon the turf; their fringed heads shone in the sunbeams, with colours that might have shamed the rainbow. Thistles are of no use, I know; but then my ground will bear nothing better at present—they will look pretty from the window, and will do no harm for a year or two; so here we are all at work—I have fetched them from the common; seeds, roots, and all, and next summer we shall see."—"Friend," said I, "I have seen many men dig up thistles, but I never thought to see a man planting them."—"But perhaps," said Hodge, with conscious superiority of wit, "you have seen them plant things not half so pretty."—"But your corn, goodman—how is your future crop to grow, if you fill the ground with thistles?" "Bless your heart!" said Hodge, with a look of contempt, "why then, to be sure, we can dig them up again—time enough yet—may be you a'nt used to digging." It was vain to resist the goodman's last argument, with all the hidden meanings with which his tone invested it—viz., that I had better mind my own business—that I was talking about what I did not understand—that I never had a field—and that, if I had, I should, *en attendant*, plant it over with thistles—therefore I passed on. So did summer's heat and winter's cold, and blithely the thistles grew. The common never bore a finer crop; and with all my prejudice I was obliged to own the flowers looked very pretty.

Meantime the goodman's store increased—the funds were forthcoming—the field was ploughed and sown—the wheat came up, and so did the thistles. A chancery suit could not have ejected them after so long possession. They had all the advantage; for while the wheat was to be sown afresh for each succeeding year, the thistles came up of themselves. Then they were goodly men and tall—they lifted their heads to the sunbeams, and scattered their seeds

in the breezes, while the sickly wheat lay withering in their shade. I did not question my goodman of his crops. Every spring I saw him rooting up thistles, and every summer I saw the thistles blow—and for every one he left, there next year came up twenty. Whether, as years advanced, they became less numerous, or whether he lived to see them exterminated, I cannot say—I have left that part of the country.

Do my readers not believe my story? Is my goodman's folly too impossible? Let them consider a little—for I have seen other labourers than he, who sow a harvest they would be loth to reap, and trust to future years to mend it. Of those who doubt the sanity of my goodman Hodge, many may thoughtlessly be doing the same thing; whether they be parents, whose fondest charge is the education of their children, and their fondest hopes its produce; or whether their one small field be the yet unsettled character of their own youthful mind. In my extensive listenings, I have seen many things that have surprised me only less than the reasonings by which they were defended; but I would rather speak upon the general principle, than particularise in the application of it; except it be some few instances by way of illustration. I believe the application can scarcely, in any case, be equivocal. Every careful mother knows, every reflecting woman knows, what is the moral produce she desires of the mind she has to cultivate—or rather, let me say, every Christian knows, what are the fruits the absent Lord of the domain expects should be rendered him, by those whom he has left in charge. If these fruits be purity and holiness of heart, simplicity and sobriety of mind, pious consistency of purpose, and a life of determined separation from all that is sinful in the practices of the world, what are we to say of the honesty, or of the competency, of that steward, who, to produce them, sows the seeds of folly, and plants the root of pride, and encourages the growth of earthliness, and cultivates a taste for things forbidden? I have talked or listened to many parents on this subject, during the education of their families. I have seen a father

encourage his boys to fight out an amateur battle, for the right of possession to a puppy-dog, and yield it to the victor—and when I asked him if he intended his boys should in after-life take possession by force of what they could not prove a right to, he said, “No—but boys must learn courage—it is their nature to fight, and it is good exercise for their limbs—they would know better when they were men.” I have seen a mother take her daughters to a dancing-school, to be taught every fashionable manœuvre of the ball-room—and when I asked her if she meant her daughters should be introduced to amusements she did not herself approve, she said, “She hoped not—the principles she laboured to instil would, she trusted, prevent it—but till they were of an age to feel their influence, she must let them do as others do—there was no harm in children’s dancing.” I have seen a teacher bring tears and blushes upon the cheek of a pains-taking booby, by shewing him the achievements of his brother, assuring him, that while the younger brother was sent to college, he, for his stupidity, must go behind the counter. I asked him if he wished that when that boy became a man, he should be pained by the superiority of others, or ashamed of the station to which Providence assigned him. He answered me, “Nay—but emulation is the finest thing in the world: it is impossible to make anything of boys without the stimulus of rivalry.” I have asked a lady, whose children I saw every evening playing at cards for halfpence, and vehemently contending for success, whether she was bringing them up to be gamesters, or to waste their hours in frivolous pursuits and unwholesome excitations of temper and feeling. Half laughing and half angry, as at a foolish question, she said, “Of course not—but it did not signify how children amused themselves.” Of another, who was cramming her children’s minds with most precious nonsense, in the form of books, I asked if she meant that they should be weak, ill-judging, and romantic women. She, too, said, “No—but children do not understand sensible books—she was glad to get them to read at all, and should give them better books when they

were older." A few times in my life, I have seen parents take—no, not take (for they would themselves have been ashamed to be seen there), but send—their children to the theatre, and other public places, which they had taught them to consider inconsistent with the spiritual requirements of the gospel, and the safe conduct of a corruptible nature through a corrupting world—alleging, that it is desirable, at a certain age, to let young people taste these pleasures, that they may better appreciate the nature and tendency of them.

Let me pause a moment. Of those who are reading this, some will say, "But we do not think there is any harm in public places, in dancing, in boxing, and all these things you talk about." I answer, "That is not the question. What I particularise applies only to those who do think these things objectionable, as leading into sin; and who wish their children should grow up in this opinion. To you these instances may not apply; but, if there is anything in the world you do think wrong or unbecoming in man or woman, suppose that to be the thing I have instanced, and the case will be in point. I meant not to blame any one for planting the root, of which he wishes to gather."

One word to those young persons who are free, or are allowed, in some measure, to judge for themselves—and perhaps a few years more of age may not make the words inapplicable. What is it you intend to be? A child of God, a purified jewel of the Redeemer's crown, a heavenly plant, bearing seed a hundredfold—walking not after the course of this world in the vanity of your minds, but in meet and holy preparation for the bliss of heaven? Do you desire to fulfil the purport of your baptismal vow, to renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that you will neither follow nor be led by them—obediently to keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life—even as you have pledged yourself to do, in these words, or others of like meaning? These are great fruits—your fallow field

is ill disposed to bear them—the air about you is well prepared to blight them. Oh! why are you so bold? Why do you reason so absurdly, and act so foolishly, as in many cases you are seen to do:—when you insist on going once but to see; you know it is wrong, you do not mean to make a practice of it—when you seek companions and employments you know will dissipate your thoughts and unsettle your habits—when you poison your minds, and stimulate your passions, and heat your imagination, and pervert your taste by every species of pernicious reading and unhallowed talk, by ambitious schemes and unsanctified desires? Would you be persuaded—would those who have the management of others but consider—how hard a thing it is to purify, and make meet for glory, a spirit born in sin, and conceived in iniquity, prone to evil as the sparks fly upward, but to all good unwilling—a soil that bears indigenous every bitter and unwholesome weed, but will only be cultured into fruitfulness by toil and care, favoured with the dews of heaven, and the sunbeams of celestial grace! We must have had small experience in life, and less in religion, if we do not know the difficulties, the miseries, the conflicting feelings, entailed upon us by the tastes and associations of our past lives—how very difficult it is, with every motive and inclination to the work, to subdue one evil propensity, or root out one ungodly feeling; to correct even one, the smallest sin to which we are habituated—if we may venture to call anything small which is offensive to the pure vision of the Most High.

We scarcely expect to be understood, to the full extent of our meaning, by any but those who, having come to be like-minded with their Lord, have learned to know no misery equal to the consciousness of sin, no desire so intense as to be holy in his sight, no hatred so deep as towards iniquity apart from its eternal consequences. But I could wish that the less experienced would take it on the word of those who are before them: for, if honest in religion, they will come to this mind at some time. It is then that the heart becomes conscious of the mischief of every habit, of every in-

clination, or taste, or feeling, that has been engendered by example, or cultivated by indulgence. Then the tossed and troubled spirit has cause to say, "Why was I encouraged in these feelings, till they have become as natural to me as to think or breathe? Why did I feed my imagination with these images, till I find it impossible to expel them from my mind? Where did I learn this taste for vanities, that seems determined to go with me almost to heaven?" I do not know whether what we hear be all a fiction; or whether those who, at the altar on their knees, declare that the memory of sin is grievous to them, and the burden of it intolerable, have any such sensations as their words express—but if they have, I am sure they cannot thank their parents for having poured one drop unnecessary of bitter memory into that full cup, nor themselves for having voluntarily added one feather's weight to that too heavy burden.

Admit that the thistles may be rooted out—that the girl who is taught vanity, will not be vain when she becomes a Christian woman—and the youth who is encouraged in oppression, rivalry, and pride, will not be contentious or dissatisfied when he becomes a Christian man—still be it remembered, it is no magic touch of the celestial wand that converts the bond-slave of earth into the meet inheritor of heaven. It can do so, we know—but generally, as regards the sanctification of the heart, after it has been pardoned and renewed, the process is a long, and often very painful one. It is by fire the gold is purified. By many a painful excision the eye is made single. Sorrow after sorrow comes—draught after draught of misery is drained—and the heart has sometimes to be buried beneath the wreck of everything it has loved and delighted in, before earth and self can be crushed out of it. Why should we be so mad, so unjust to our children, and cruel to ourselves, as to increase the difficulty of the cure, because confident it will in the issue be performed? Why do we plant our ground with thistles, because, after years of labour, they may be rooted out?

The Three Sabbaths.

It was the universal Sabbath,
When the prayer
Flows from the righteous with intenser love :
A holier calm succeeds ; and sweeter dreams
Visit the slumbers of the penitent.

SOUTHEY'S *Thalaba*.

MR LISTENER,



N the earlier part of your listening career, you gave us a paper upon the misuse of the Sabbath, in which you adverted with much truth to the weariness, idleness, and impatience, which commonly attend its hallowed hours, among those who do not think themselves at liberty openly to profane them, at the same time that the law they submit to, is at best an onerous and painful burden. I doubt not, that to a portion of your readers, these things were applicable—I hope they were beneficial. I make no doubt that the newspapers have disappeared, the young ladies' correspondents waited for their letters another day or two, the friends who assembled for gossip stayed at home, and the carriages rested in the stable. All this I am bound to believe, from the known readiness of all good people to take advice. Whether the clock that went too slowly, now keeps time on Sunday as well as on other days,

will depend, I imagine, on stronger influence than yours. But, Mr Listener, there is a portion of your readers to whom that paper did not apply. They love the holy law they have pledged themselves to keep, and desire to use the Sabbath as shall be most acceptable to God, and best serve the purpose of its institution. To themselves and their families they would fain make it lovely that they may love it, and delightful that they may delight in it. On their behalf I address myself to you. Some of us are young and without guide: many advisers come about us: "Come hither and go thither—be at this place in the morning, and at that place in the afternoon, and at the other in the evening—teach that school, help that society, devour these five hundred books at once. It is impossible to want employment on Sunday, when there is so much to be done for the service of God." Others of us, if not young in years, are new to the desires that have taken possession of our hearts. We are as if just awakened to a scene where old things are passed away, and all things are become new. Our children are about us, and our domestics are looking to us for example; yet we scarcely know ourselves what is best and fittest to be done. We only know that we desire to do what is most in conformity with the spirit of God's law. We have looked at your paper; you have only told us what we are not to do. But it is not sufficient that God's law be not broken. They are not the arbitrary appointments of a ruler who makes laws merely because he is a ruler, and has no object in them but to try the obedience of his subjects. They are established for a purpose. Every law of God has a reason and an object, tending to his glory and his people's good. Tell us how we, especially those of us who are young, or have the young about us, may best fulfil the spirit and purpose of this law—"Ye shall observe my Sabbaths to keep them holy"—tell us how we may learn to love as well as to keep them.

Many Sabbaths have passed over since I received the above request. I would have complied with it immediately—for it is a subject that my heart delights in—but I am

expected, by virtue of my profession, to hear before I speak; and rather to report what others do, than offer the abstract reflections of my own mind. This difficulty has been removed. I was at the time upon an excursive visit among my friends. I believed that all or most of them would consecrate their Sabbaths to the best of their judgment—for all were what is called professors of religion; and I had no reason to doubt but that the laws of God which are on their lips, are written on their hearts to do them. I considered that among these I might witness what my correspondents desired to be told—and I was not deceived in my expectations.

The family in which I passed my first Sabbath from home, were persons long distinguished in the religious world as servants of God, living in his faith, and devoted to his service. Propriety, charity, and love, were the character of this house at all times. During the week I had seen nothing of which I could have said the practice had an unholy and unchristian tendency; and I had heard no mention of things sacred, but in such terms as Christians love to hear. But the days, of course, had been occupied with a variety of things. The younger part of the family were engaged every hour about some matter of education, some healthful exercise, or innocent recreation. The father was abroad upon business of a thousand kinds, and the mother engaged with business of as many kinds at home. Of course, they had all their hours of private recollection, perhaps at daybreak or at midnight; but, as far as could be perceived, the hours of family prayer were the only periods of cessation from secular affairs. Such just importance was attached to the value of time in this house, that to have been idle would have been felt a disgrace to the youngest of its members; and it is much to say that everything I saw them employed about became their age, and the several duties of their station.

Saturday passed like other days, and I heard no one remark that to-morrow would be Sunday. Perhaps it was not extraordinary that what happens every week should not

be remarked upon : but I am so much in the habit of saying to myself, "To-morrow will be Sunday," I seemed to miss the remark ; and no moment occurred in all the day, in which to have said it myself, would not have seemed foreign to the purpose.

When I awaked on the Sunday morning, though the wonted sounds without the house were hushed, the sounds within were just the same as usual—as much brushing, and banging, and dusting, and all the movements that denote business and activity renewed. The people came down the same, and the breakfast passed the same, and nobody said, "It is Sunday." So much like another day did it feel, that to reassure myself of its being really the holy day, I asked at what time the service began. "Oh, at eleven o'clock," said Maria, jumping up hastily; "is it time?" And all were off to prepare themselves. They went all to church, and from their manner there, I believe their hearts went with them. They listened with feeling attention to the sermon, and walked home with an air of serious reflection. I had every reason to suppose some of the servants went to church also; though, as the work required of them was plainly as much as on other days, all could not have gone. During the remainder of the morning, I observed the father walking over his grounds, giving orders for to-morrow, and directions for the week-days' work to such of his servants as could be found. I observed the mother doing the same at home ; walking into the nursery, and about the school-room ; noticing things that, in the bustle of the last week, had escaped attention, and giving orders about things that, in the bustle of the next week, might escape memory. The children were not at their usual lessons : I believe they had been learning something sacred—of this I am not sure—most likely they did so every day : but now the young ones were playing at their usual games—the floors were strewed as usual with toys, carts, dolls, and cards, and the usual complement of story-books. The elder daughters were in the garden tying up the flowers. There was an air of leisure in the house, certainly, but none of enjoyment or

concern, or any particular engagement of the mind. There was a large dinner, as on other days: the dessert was scarcely on the table when some one said it was church time; and such as were inclined arose and went to church; the servants certainly could not. On returning, I observed that those who had not gone were either writing letters, or reading the same books as on Saturday. I do not say they were profane books—they were not; but they were those that usually lay on the table; I believe they were Cowper's *Task*, the *History of the Albigenses*, and *Buchanan's Memoirs*. Our return produced conversation: it was sensible, rational, and occasionally serious, as it was on other days: still nobody said—"It is Sunday."

When the younger people had retired, I asked my friend if she allowed her children the same amusements on Sundays as on other days. She answered me that she did—their amusements were perfectly innocent. I continued, "And you do not wish to spare your servants' labour on this day?" She replied, "I would not do outrage to their feelings in anything—I encourage and wish them to go to church—and if they chose to do their work on Saturday, they might—otherwise I do not think it of any consequence."—"Tell me, then," I said, "what it is you mean? I know you would not act against your conscience for any consideration; and I have always supposed your affections are with God. Tell me why you do not keep the Sabbaths he has appointed." She answered, "If I believed he required it, I should keep them certainly; and as to outward respect before men, I do in some sort observe them, because it is an ordinance of our country, and tending to public good. It was a part of the moral law, I know, when men had no better rule to live by. But under the influence of spiritual religion, I endeavour to live soberly and righteously before God every day—I teach my children never to forget, and never to offend him—I think we are now under a different dispensation, and may enjoy the freedom the gospel gives, without shackling ourselves with ordinances that belonged to a darker and a sadder day."—"Madam," I

said, "you will excuse my words—but yours is a strange language. Of course, I am acquainted with all that has been said about the abrogation of the Mosaic law—I do not wish to speak of it at all—for, if it were possible to prove that the law of the two tables passed away with the dispensation they belonged to, you would not, I think, release yourself from a single obligation that is contained in them. Nay, with the other nine commandments, I am persuaded, you would be very sorry to dispense; and it seems very strange to me that you should desire to be rid of this. Is it so onerous a burden to set apart a day in seven to the peculiar service of God, that I hear you talk of freedom and gospel privilege? I should have thought the privilege was to keep it."

She answered me—"We must take things in the spirit, not in the letter. If I did not serve God on the other six days, it might be very delightful to me to be allowed to serve him on this: if I was in the habit of forgetting him, such a memorial would be very necessary; but I hope this is not the case. I desire that every day with me should be 'a Sabbath to the Lord.'"—"My friend will excuse me," I replied, "if I say I think she speaks too proudly. An eternal Sabbath is the promise of heaven, but it is not the hope of earth. Do you mean me to understand, that during the activity of secular occupation, in which I have seen your whole house engaged, from eight in the morning till eleven at night—for even your labours of benevolence, however high their motive, *are* secular—that your minds have been in no degree preoccupied and drawn off from God; so as to lose, if not the memory, at least the enjoyment, of his presence? Do you say that your husband in his counting-house, and your children with their masters, and your servants in the laundry, are as able and as likely to retain a holy and a heavenly spirit, as if they had nothing else to occupy their minds? Are you so dispossessed of that spirit of earthliness which once reigned in you, that it never makes an effort to recover its predominance, taking the advantage of your legitimate occupation with the things of time, to displace the preference of eternity?"

"These occupations are indispensable," my friend replied; "they are duties. Whatever their dangers, since God has placed us in them, he can support us through all, and sanctify them to us. He knows the infirmities of his people, and to what they stand exposed."

"And therefore," I said, "appointed the Sabbath, to strengthen them and recover them from the mischiefs of that exposure—as, after a hard-fought battle, the general orders his legions to repose, and gives balms and ointments for their wounds. Labour was in the curse pronounced on man for sin—that is, the necessity of labouring for the things that perish. And no sooner did mercy, in the Redeemer's name, remit a portion of that curse, than it remitted, too, a portion of the labour—as if it had bidden us return one day in seven to paradise, to forget our banishment in undisturbed enjoyment of our God. Are we so proud as to say we need it not? Are these labours so congenial, that we should desire it not? Is it this permission to forget and forego everything but what our hearts are set upon, that you speak of as a *shackle* from which the children of God are freed?" The entrance of the husband broke off the conversation.

The second Sabbath offered me a different scene. I heard my beautiful Amelia up before her usual time, sorting, and tying up packets of school-books. To breakfast she came, with her bonnet on, and her cloak on her arm—scalded her throat with tea, and said she had not time to eat—she had to hear twenty children their catechism before church time and quickly she disappeared. We found her again at the church door. Be it enough to say, the service was delightful—the sermon all that it could be to incline the heart to holiness and peace. My sweet Amelia looked pensively happy as we bent our way homeward, till catching a sight of a clock, "Dear!" cried she, "it is half-past one—my scholars will be waiting;"—and before we reached home, she was seated in the hall, surrounded by women and children. I stopped to listen, and found she was teaching them to read and spell. It was nearly three, when seeing them disperse, I begged

Amelia to take refreshment, and asked her if reading and spelling were religious instructions. She said, "Not exactly—but when they had learned to read, they could read the Bible." I was just going to say, that was a contingency that hardly seemed to warrant the unnecessary teaching of those things on Sunday, when a tremendous thunder at the door announced nothing less than a carriage. "On Sunday!" I thought, "and here"—when in came an elderly lady, flushed, and out of breath. "My dear child," she said to Amelia, "don't lose a moment—I'm come for you, and you must go—Mr W. of York is going to preach at the New Street Chapel—make haste—it is two miles off—I've got the carriage—I don't use it of a Sunday, but this is too great a treat to lose—I just heard it by chance—there is not a moment to spare."—"Oh, thank you!" cried Amelia, "how delightful! I was going to the Sunday-school; but for once"—and into the carriage she jumped. "Dearest me!" said the good old grandmother, in the arm-chair from which she was too infirm to move—"that child will kill herself—but there—she's always after good—not a bit of luncheon has she had! Well, times are altered—when I was young, good people went to their parish church, and read their Bible, and thought that was enough."

The dinner was on the table at five o'clock, but Amelia was not returned. We were in progress when she came. "There now," said the old lady, "sit down and speak to me a word if you can—but eat some dinner first—I have not heard the sound of your sweet voice to-day, nor any of the good things you know how to cheer my heart with."—"Dearest grandmamma," said the lovely girl, "I delight to talk to you—but you know what a day Sunday is to me—I never have a moment to sit down." The clock struck six, and we were ready for church, when there walked in a group of young people, whose errand ran thus—Amelia must go with them to-night to Old Street—there was a Missionary from Nova Scotia—a most interesting young man, not more than three-and-twenty, and had preached two hours and a quarter this morning—he had been among the savages—it

would be a most interesting sermon—she must go. Amelia hesitated a moment, but her blue eyes beamed impatience at her own delay—“I should like to go—but I was going to church with grandpapa—he will not like to be left—I do long to go.” The old gentleman understood her looks. “There, go, dear, go if you like—I never cross young people in these things. Don’t understand it; didn’t use to be so in my time. Take care of yourself, that’s all.” We went to church, and heard a most beautiful finishing to the morning’s discourse, which we had not perceived it wanted, but by which we now found it doubly valuable.

Amelia rejoined us after nine o’clock; for the sermon, as she told us exultingly, had been full two hours long. The colour was gone from her cheek, and the brightness from her eye; she threw herself on the sofa, took some tea, but said she was too much tired to eat. In vain she tried to read—in vain the old lady, who had heard nothing, entreated to be told what *she* had heard. Amelia was exhausted beyond any effort to recover herself. “Dear Amelia,” I said to her, as we were going to bed, “have you enjoyed your Sabbath?”—“Oh yes, I hope so, but I am dead tired!”—“Do you feel the better for this day of rest?” She smiled at the word—“Rest I have had none; but I must be the better for all the good I have heard.”—“May you not have heard too much?”—“No, that cannot be: is not preaching the nourishment appointed for our souls? It is more needful than the food we eat.”—“But there is such a thing as digesting.”—“True,” she said; “to-day, I have only had time to devour the food, I must digest it to-morrow.”—“That is a new system; your powers should be strong. And then you have had no time to yourself all day.”—“No, that is the worst of it: but we must not live for ourselves.”—“And yet, I think the Sabbath was given us for our own sakes, to rest and refresh our souls.”—“From week-day labours—but we should spend it in well-doing, and imparting spiritual good to all who”—“Who need it—and you, then, are not of that number?”—“Indeed, yes: I need everything; I feel very sad, and quite confused—I know I should profit more by being in my

chamber, in communion with God ; but then"—“ But then you are the only person for whose benefit your Sabbath was not intended.”

I arrived on the following Saturday at the house of a friend. She apologised for the absence of her daughters all the morning. “ Saturday,” she said, “ is a particular day among us—we feel like school-boys finishing up their tasks to be ready for a holiday. We write all necessary letters—if any little matters are in agitation among us, we try to arrange them, to get them off our minds ; particularly we try to disencumber our memory of little things, such as orders, promises, &c., that they may not obtrude themselves to-morrow. In short it is a universal settling day among us. And you would be amused to see how the little ones mimic and burlesque our plan—arranging their toys, giving back what they have of each other’s, and settling all differences—you will see them in every corner of the house, collecting what they have left about, and hunting for what is lost—if I want one of them, it is ‘ O mamma, you know it is Saturday, and we are so busy.’ I never let them see me smile at their odd devices of arrangement, for I love to see them imbibe our habits, before they can share our feelings.”

At dinner, I learned that all arrangement was at an end—indeed I could see it ; for the house looked as I have seen others look when everything is put in order for a rout. Fresh flowers were in the chimney, fresh perfumes on the table—work, books, and drawings, all were laid away. I foolishly asked, if company was expected. “ Yes,” my friend replied, “ we shall have company ; but not such as will trouble you. We do nothing on Saturday evening but prepare for Sunday. We collect our poor together, to instruct them in religion, and prepare their hearts for Sabbath occupation ; and, as far as we can, remove any little anxieties that may be on their minds, or disputes that may be between them. We give them tea, and while the elders instruct them, it is the privilege of the little ones to sit up half-an-hour later than usual, to wait upon them—one not lightly

prized, I assure you. When this is done, we like to sit down and talk together, or perhaps read together, if anything particularly interesting has come in—but we do not like to have any matters of business brought in; and our girls have made it a forfeit to disarrange their minds by the introduction of any unwelcome subjects—it sometimes causes us a little mirth to determine whether the forfeit has been incurred.

Sunday came. When I appeared, the youngest child ran up to me, and asked if I was sure I was in a good humour. I said, I hoped so. “Because,” she said, “nobody must get up in a bad humour on a Sunday.” The parents smiled, but did not check her: I had before remarked the stillness of the house—I believe, literally nothing had been done, but to light the fires, and prepare the breakfast.

The little ones were all present during breakfast, an unusual thing, receiving from mamma the materials of occupation and amusement; pictures of sacred subjects, little Sunday books, and various articles of that sort, made valuable by being never produced except on Sunday. My friend told me, that though they had similar things in the week, she always had a choice set for Sunday; a trick that was certain to succeed in making them desired; and when the set was worn, and the novelty quite exhausted, they passed into the common nursery store, and new ones were provided; by which the Sabbath was a distinguished and desired day. This was all she could do for them while so young. Some little things were given them to learn; but it was made rather a matter of credit and ambition than necessity, to have plenty of things to repeat at tea-time. After breakfast everybody disappeared till the service-bell rang; then all were expected to assemble, to go *together* to divine worship. This was a rule; we went to church or chapel; I shall not say which, though I know, because I would not have it supposed this is an important point of my picture—it makes not to the subject. It was the place the parents had selected as best for themselves and their children, and it was not expected any one should know a better.

On our return home, my friend said to me, "You will excuse our leaving you till dinner. It is our rule to separate, and pass the time alone ; our servants, who are confined in the week, have leave to walk out. Our doors are closed against all comers. The girls go to their rooms, or to the garden, where they like, but are strictly enjoined to be each one alone. For my own part, charged as I am with the care of such a family, the right to be alone with God, and do nothing but communicate with myself or him, is a privilege I cannot forego for anything. I never even read, except a little in my Bible : I read enough on other-days. It is so sweet to me to feel I *may* do nothing, after a week of which every hour is employed ; it is really the greatest luxury I know. If I could find no thoughts of my own to employ my mind, this morning's service would amply have supplied them. I believe the girls feel the same ; but I do not constrain them as to occupation—merely that they should not be in company. We shall meet you at four o'clock to dinner. I hope you will not want anything, for it is very likely your bell might not be answered : there are folks in the nursery, however."

At four o'clock, we met at a dinner entirely cold ; and remained together, talking or silent, as we pleased ; but no one spoke of yesterday's business, or to-morrow's plans ; and what pleased me almost as much, nobody said, "I am going so and so to-night—where are you going ?" We were all going, *of course*, to our accustomed place of worship. We went ; and, when we returned, all the children came forth to tea, with hymns, collects, and all sorts of things to say : we each took our share in hearing them. There was abundance of gaiety, and abundance of cake and fruit, to lay by for to-morrow ; and I remarked that wine and cakes were sent down for the servants. Then the Sunday books and pictures were surrendered, and in half-an-hour all was peace again.

The elder party remained together ; sacred music was the proposed amusement ; every one who had learned to play, however imperfectly, was to do her part. All sang together.

for their own pleasure : and those who excelled, sang apart for the pleasure of the rest. Books were on the table if any one liked to read ; but not the same that lay there always. Prayers were as usual, and we retired.

Here are three patterns for making a Sunday—my readers can choose between them.



Janet Geboir.

La simplicité est une droiture de l'âme qui retranche tout retour inutile sur elle-même et sur ses actions. . . . On voit beaucoup de gens qui sont sincères sans être simples ; ils ne disent rien qu'ils ne croient vrai ; ils ne veulent passer que pour ce qu'ils sont ; mais ils craignent sans cesse de passer pour ce qu'ils ne sont pas ; ils sentent toujours à s'étudier eux-mêmes, à compasser toutes leurs paroles et toutes leurs pensées, et à repasser tout ce qu'ils ont fait dans la crainte d'avoir fait, trop ou trop peu. Ces gens-là sont sincères ; mais il ne sont pas simples.—FENELON.



BEGIN to feel very much like a pedlar, who goes about the country delivering at one place the wares he collects at another. Often the ladies ask me for what they want. I tell them I will look out for it where I go, and bring it them—and I always feel obliged by the commission. It is not long since I was asked, “if it is possible to *acquire* Simplicity ?” There is enough in the question to occupy the philosophic mind, and put the quickest reasoner to a pause. For there is an anomaly in the ideas the words convey. To acquire, in this sense, implies to study after, to put on—it implies intention, design—and those are not features of simplicity. And again, the want of simplicity implies something too much already, not a deficiency to be supplied. The pure white web may be dyed of many colours, and when tired of one

colour, we may dye it of another—but he is a skilful chemist who brings it white again. Can the learned acquire ignorance? Can the guilty acquire innocence? Can the beautiful flower, that the sun has faded, and the rains have stained, and the worms have gnawed upon, close up its petals and blow again, as fair and spotless as it opened first? It was a deep question. I thought it might be solved by one passage of Scripture; but, mindful of my profession, I said I would inquire, and report what I could learn. I tell a tale of truth—disguised in outward circumstance, but true in all that is essential to the subject. I expect that many a heart in reading it, will own its truth; and see, in the issue of it, the object of her hopes, if not as yet attained. And let the young attend. The once-stained tissue will discharge its colours easily—the spirit that has dyed itself deeper and deeper in the schemings of selfishness and pride, has a hard task in this backward process.

Janet Bevoir was an only child. The offspring of anxious wishes and long-protracted expectations, she came into the world the most important being of her little sphere. I do not know how an heir-apparent feels when he first discovers what it is to be a king—but I suppose not much unlike to what Janet felt when she found herself the single object of attention to all about her, to whom everything was devoted, and in whose person everybody's happiness was vested. While she slept, the prettiest babe that ever was seen, as many have been besides, unconscious yet of anything, many were the consultations held between the parents and the maiden aunts about the education of the little Janet; and, if there was any difference of opinion as to the method, all were agreed that it was time to begin. As early as she was capable of looking out upon her own condition, Janet perceived two parents, three aunts, a governess, and six servants, intently set to see what Miss Janet would do, what Miss Janet would say, what Miss Janet must eat, drink, and wear—in short, the whole business of whose existence was to bring Miss Janet to perfection. She must have been perverse, indeed, if, against such a current of testimony, she

had not believed everything she said and did to be of the utmost importance, and become intently occupied with herself. The pretty creature was far enough from such perversity—with a disposition of more gentleness and timidity than strength, and parts rather brilliant than solid, extreme sensibility was the prominent feature of her character.

Pas trop gouverner, is a lesson statesmen are slow to learn—and so are some besides them. Janet must neither move, think, or speak unwatched and undirected. She never took a thing from the table but she must lay it down again, and take it up the other way—she never came into the room, but she was sent out again to come in properly—she never spoke, but her words were reasoned upon, modified, and explained; corrected, if they were wrong—applauded and repeated from mouth to mouth, if they happened to be right. By no means was the little Janet left to suppose it was her family only she was trained to please—she had every reason to think otherwise. When company was expected, the aunts came to see Janet's dressing—she was charged to mind how she came into the room, how she put the plums into her mouth, what she answered to those who might speak to her, and whom she was to take especial pains to please. And when the company disappeared, how Janet had behaved, and what was thought of her, was all that seemed important to be retraced. Being an attentive and docile child, with a good deal of natural tact, Janet seldom failed to perform her part to the letter of her instructions; but she was not yet seven years old, before it was evident that she was performing always. She never spoke from the impulse of her little heart; but as she thought would be most applauded and approved. She never moved in the careless elasticity of infant spirits, but with a recollection always of being observed. The great evil to poor Janet from all this, was the perpetual concentration of her thoughts upon herself, and upon the effect produced by herself on others; never allowed one moment to forget herself, or feel herself forgotten.

Janet's education was carried through in the same way; and she grew up to be as much interested in her own dis-

tinction, as every one was about her. What was at first a simple compliance with the guiding of others, became a settled purpose of her own. The days of womanhood approached, and Janet made ready to produce herself, with as much anxious speculation upon the results, as the doting parents or the maiden aunts. Poor Janet ! not easily shall I forget her, as I saw her at eighteen, fitted out for first appearance : the subject, for five years past, of her imagination's dreams ; acted over in idea a thousand times, with every probable and possible effect—the subject, too, of many a conversation to which she was a party in her family. How Janet should appear, how Janet would be received, how Janet would *succeed*—for that, I believe, is the term—involved the interest and happiness of all she loved. Might I pause one moment from my subject—might I say one word to parents in that rank of life where only these things exist—might I suppose there is one religious mother, whose heart is still seared and fettered with the habits of fashionable life, to whom the word would reach !—If that which in the secondary classes of society would be considered a disgraceful speculation, and bring ridicule on the mother who should be detected in it, is the peculiar privilege of the higher, surely the heart of innocence need not be made a party to the speculation. If the business of settling a daughter must be planned and carried on by her parents, surely the simplicity of youthful feeling need not be converted into a system of deliberate design, by teaching a girl from her childhood, that the wreck of all her happiness, the mortification of her parents, if not the loss of their affections, will attend the failure of their expectations. But, perhaps, I had better go on with my story.

Janet was handsome—she might be said to be elegant—but she was decidedly *maniérée*. Her mind was well informed and sensible—but there was an air of intention in everything she said, that chilled at once the careless flow of conversation ; warning everybody, as it were, to keep under arms ; though of mischievous or unkind intentions, Janet was incapable. Janet was neither forward nor self-confi-

dent : nor should I say she thought too highly of herself ; but still there was a perpetual looking out for observation ; an expectation to be noticed ; or, perhaps, a watchful speculation as to who would notice her and who would not, which a good-natured world easily construes into a desire for admiration. Janet's conduct was marked by the most undeviating propriety ; she knew how to say precisely the right thing to the right person. I do not know that she ever said what she did not mean ; but it was always apparent that she said the thing because she was addressing my Lord B., or because she was answering to Mrs D., or because she remembered herself to be Janet Bevoir, and not because her heart at the moment suggested the words. In short, the opinion generally given of Janet in society, was that she was a pretty, genteel girl, and rather clever ; but she thought too much of herself, and had no heart. Had this been true, poor Janet had been happier than she was. She had feelings of more than common sensibility ; but, the simplicity of her heart destroyed, its susceptibility remained only as a torment to itself, within reach of everybody and everything to wound. Hitherto her sensibility had cost her nothing : because she was loved and cherished by all with whom she was in contact. If anything in her was disapproved, it was told her kindly, and she was instructed to do better—if she was approved, applause and caresses assured her of it. But now, poor girl, she was to be criticised before she was loved, and to be judged without being brought into court. Had Janet been simple-minded, she would have been contented to do right, and have taken it for granted she should be approved ; she would have followed the dictates of good sense and good breeding, without thinking upon the effect she produced on others : in short, she would have enjoyed society, and contributed to its enjoyments, without thinking of herself at all. As it was, Janet acted in imagination all her appearances beforehand : and when she returned to her chamber, tormented herself with conjectures how she had acted. Had she talked too much ? had she talked too little ?—ought she to have said this ? ought she not to have said that ? This

person seemed distant to her—had she given any offence? That person looked at her and laughed—had she seemed ridiculous? Janet would call to mind every word she had said herself, to consider its value over again; and every word anybody had said to her, to sift its possible meanings to the bottom; and her heart suffered a thousand mortifications, and received a thousand wounds nobody had intended to inflict.

What began in guiltless self-torment, a few years of the seething influence of society converted into vice. Janet became tenacious, jealous, suspicious. Always *meaning* something herself, she learned to suppose every one else *meant* something; and was ever upon the look-out for affronts and neglects. Losing amid the hard judgments of the world the confidence she had felt in the bosom of affection, without losing the consciousness of observation or the desire of success, her natural timidity prevailed, and she became restless, embarrassed, and reserved. Her eye perpetually on herself, she could not look upon another without making comparisons; and thence she became jealous and disposed to envy.

Alas! poor Janet! a rugged and thorny way to her was the path of fashionable prosperity. I did not see her again for ten years. I know not what befell her in the interval, but I will describe her as I found her then. She had become what we call a religious woman—that is to say, she had given up the habits and amusements of fashionable life, and devoted herself to serious and religious pursuits. I am inclined to think the principle of piety really existed in her bosom—but there was no simplicity in her heart. Janet was acting still, though in a different character, and before a different audience. I do not say that she was deceitful, or a hypocrite—she had not been that at any time—but there was the same desire for effect, the same calculation on other people's opinion of her, the same consciousness of observation, the same perpetual reverting upon her own words and deeds—not simply as they appeared before God—that had been good—but as to the impression they had made on

others. The effect of this want of simplicity on her actions was to produce a great deal of instability; changing her purposes and opinions, as one motive or another, one design or another happened to predominate; wanting the simple one of love and obedience to God. It led her into all sorts of undertakings, without regard to her capacity and fitness for them, and bitter mortification when she failed. It led her to fantastic peculiarities of dress and manner at one time, and to sinful compliance with fashion at another; to produce what she thought a good effect, it is true—but still an effect. She went to certain places, that it might be said she was there. She was the devoted disciple of every new preacher till his popularity was past, or there came a newer; and then she was converted and enlightened over again. On her feelings the effect was as intensely miserable, as the subjects of them had become important. Professing to trust the Saviour for everything, her eye was turned from him to perpetual contemplation of herself. Professing to take his faith for her lamp, and his Word for her way-mark, she was perpetually measuring herself by the measure of those about her, and moulding her opinions anew, to meet the predominant party in which she stood distinguished—for good, ever for good—but still distinguished—confusion in her belief, confusion in her motives, confusion in her perceptions of right, was the necessary consequence. Looking ever on herself, changeful, faltering, faithless, instead of on that God who changes not, Janet was at one time elated by ill-grounded hopes, at another depressed by fears no better grounded. The approbation of the pious bore her in imagination to the very gates of heaven—their slights and surmises left her hopeless at the gates of hell—forgetful that they judged, in either case, by the exterior only; while He who saw her heart was to be her only judge. In short, poor Janet was honest enough to perceive her motives were not single in anything; she never could be sure whether love to God, to man, or to herself, was the predominant one; and therefore she never could be happy. It is almost needless to say, her manner and conversation were as little

simple as her heart. The phraseology of a prevailing party, the conventional talk of a sect, uttered without seeming to issue from any correspondent emotion—opinions forced into notice without any suggestion from the occasion—this was the character of Janet's conversation : questions she could as well have answered as asked—doubts that had never really troubled her—hopes and fears to which she was an utter stranger, but all which it was of course to talk about in religious society. Out of it, Janet's timidity prevailed : she was afraid of ridicule, afraid of censure, afraid to speak at all, or to speak as she believed—what would be thought of her was ever uppermost.

Can the leopard change his spots, and the Ethiop his skin ? Can the simplicity of the unconscious child be restored to the bosom seven times dyed in artifice and pride ? Can the practised heart unlearn its doubleness, and become single ? Ten years later, I saw Janet Bevoir again. Much had happened in that time. A reverse of fortune had deprived her of the means of distinction. Some extravagances of doctrine, and palpable inconsistencies of conduct had brought her religion into doubt, in the circle on whose opinions she had lived. Sickness—painful, lingering sickness—had sent her to her chamber to commune with her own heart in solitude and silence. There Janet could not act—there Janet had no audience but her God. There, for the first time in her life, Janet found herself unobserved and forgotten ; and for many a long month had nothing to do but to unclothe herself of the subterfuges of sin, and the disguises of self, and stand unmasked and single before herself, as she stood before God—an infant, guileless, helpless, naked. And there she first forgot that she was Janet Bevoir—the expected, distinguished, disappointed Janet Bevoir ; and saw in herself nothing but a reconciled child of God—the purchase of the Redeemer's blood, bought with a price, and her own no longer. When I saw her, she had recovered, and returned to society. But how altered ! Janet was simple now in everything, because her heart was simple. It was filled with one thought, one hope, one love

—or, if there were any other, they were merged in this, as the stars of heaven in the morning sunbeam. It was impelled by one motive, guided by one law, and animated by one reward. Janet saw too intently now the eye of God upon her, to consider who else observed her. Janet was too busy in approving herself honest before God, to hear what others said, or inquire what others thought. Her eye was upon herself, indeed, but it was upon that secret self that none can see besides. And now Janet's manners were simple, and her words were simple—they could not be otherwise—she meant no effect, and looked out for none—she had no intention but to do right and to speak truth—it did not signify who heard it, or who saw it. Janet had one Judge, one King, one Father. She saw herself worse than any eye beheld her, she saw herself greater than earth could make her. She lost her timidity in the discovery of the world's worthlessness, and her pretension in the discovery of her own. She forgot that she was Janet Bevoir, for she had learned that she was nothing.

My story has been too long : I can add but a few words more. Would any acquire simplicity of character ? Let them not set about to put it on—that is but to stain again the thrice-dyed web, and add a new affectation to the old ones. Let them go to the source whence conduct and conversation spring. Let them see if they worship one God or more. Instead of watching their words and actions, let them watch their hearts, and see if they act and speak to please their God, the world, or themselves, or each alternately. Let them walk with their eye on heaven, and they will walk gracefully, without thinking of their carriage. Let the heart be made single, and simplicity will grow upon their thoughts and feelings first, and ultimately upon their manner and conversation. This has been, and it can be ; for it is what the Scripture means, when it directs us to become as little children.

Hélier Èdeñ.

Vivre en soi ce n'est rien ; il faut vivre en autrui.
A qui puis-je être utile, agréable aujourd'hui ?
Voilà chaque matin ce qu'il faudrait se dire ;
Et le soir, quand des cieux la clarté se retire,
Heureux à qui son cœur tout bas a répondu :
Ce jour qui va finir, je ne l'ai pas perdu ;
Grâce à mes soins, j'ai vu, sur une face humaine,
La trace d'un plaisir ou l'oubli d'une peine !
Que la société porterait de doux fruits,
Si par de telles pensées nous étions tous conduits !



ANTING the key of revelation, and utterly at fault without it, philosophy has argued, whether man has any innate knowledge of right and wrong : or whether, indeed, there be any right or wrong, apart from the expediency or inexpediency, proved by experience to pertain to certain actions and propensities. If philosophy had no ground for these conclusions, it had, at least, some excuse for its doubts, in the confusion of opinion respecting good and evil, which has been found

wherever the light of revelation shines out. There is no crime so base and abominable, but has been somewhere held a grace, if not a virtue, in the character ; and men have been deified and adored in one place, for actions for which in another they might be hanged. The revelation of the law

of God, wherever it is acknowledged, puts an end to this discrepancy. Professedly it is adopted as the test of morality; and legislation recognises it as the standard of right and wrong; not in the spirit indeed, but in the letter. If men still continue to commit outward and gross crimes, they do it, admitting them to be such; or they endeavour to pass them under other and fictitious names.

But is there no confusion between right and wrong?—no discrepancy of opinion in Christian societies respecting the character of certain actions, habits, and feelings? Is there nothing that is a sin in one place, a harmless folly in another, and in a third, a fashionable accomplishment—the pride of one bosom, the shame of another? Have we but one name for a thing, whatever dress it wears; and that the name which God has given it? Is there nothing which the partition-wall of our houses divides into vice on one side, and virtue on the other? Nay, closer than this, is there in the same chamber nothing that one will blush to have, and another would blush to be without? Nay, closer still than this, is there no feeling, no disposition, we have felt ashamed in one company to be detected in, and ashamed in another to be supposed to want? If there be any such thing, it is a remnant of heathen darkness, which the light of truth divine has failed to dissipate—not for want of pureness in its beams, but because we have not examined our opinions by its lamp, or minded its testimony of what man misnames. How much of this confusion between right and wrong has our Saviour unravelled and exposed in his sermon on the mount! How vainly, for the most part, unravelled and exposed what man desires not to know! To those who do desire to know the wrong that they may shun it, the right that they may seek it, I will tell what gave rise to these observations.

In my course of listening, now of many years' length, my attention has been taken with something of which I found it very difficult to trace the name. Its characters still more baffled and defeated my inquiries, while the place of its abode, and the modes of its appearing, have been so

incongruous and contradictory, I could not determine to what or to whom this indefinite something most properly belongs. I might have taken it for a misfortune, but that I observed its dwelling was with the prosperous. I might have taken it for disease, but that I found it with the young and healthful. I might have taken it for a sin, but that I heard it avow itself boldly, where I believed that sin was dreaded. It seems it has no English name; and meaning no riddle, I should have called it by its foreign one at once, but that I have found the feeling existed where it would disclaim its more fashionable appellation. By name, however, or by feature, or by what means soever, I have endeavoured to detect this thing, that in its genuine character I may present it to my readers, and bid them judge if it be friend or foe, a Christian virtue, or an unsuspected vice.

I have a young friend, but just become a woman, who is perpetually complaining of *ennui*. She is *ennuyée* in wet weather, hot weather, and cold weather. She is *ennuyée* in the country with too little company, and *ennuyée* in London with too much. She goes out, because she is *ennuyée* at home; and comes home dissatisfied, because she was *ennuyée* out. She finds some people *ennuyants*, because they talk so much; and others *ennuyants*, because they are too silent. I never put a book into her hand, though she thinks herself fond of reading, but after getting half through the first chapter, she fluttered the leaves, looked at the binding, and declared it quite *ennuyant*, or something synonymous, if not in the exact terms. I never asked her to read the most exquisite passage of poetry, or the most exalted expression of feeling, but she stopped three or four words short of the end, to express something of a similar opinion. I have heard her many times express a distaste for life, and almost a desire to be rid of it; from a feeling, which, though she gave it not the name, I could perceive, by her description of it, to be this same *ennui*. Where could I better choose to study it? to trace its characters, to detect its origin, and, if it might be, to expose its

consequences? Was it disease? Was it a misfortune? Was it sin? Was it anything, or but a modish expression, used from habit, and without a meaning? I determined to know. I had ample opportunities, and I resolved to search the secret to the bottom. I tell what I discovered, in hope that those who are conscious of the feeling, whether accustomed to use the word or not, will make the like search within themselves, to find if it originates in a source as evil.

Misfortune! Hester Eden never knew one. Sorrow never chilled her bosom. Death never widowed her affections. She had never parted from a thing she loved, nor foregone a blessing she enjoyed. Injustice had not robbed, unkindness had not wounded, falsehood had not wronged her. She was not old enough in life to know its difficulties, or feel the blightings of its disappointments. All her portion of it, yet, had been domestic affection, the indulgence of genteel life, and the advantages of polite education, unearned, and unembittered. Disease! Hester Eden was a finely-formed, lively, healthy girl—pain had never racked her limbs, nor sickness dimmed her eyes, nor watchfulness chased her slumbers. Was it anything? Could that be nothing, which often made existence a weariness to herself; and herself, not seldom, a weariness to those about her; with everything a bountiful Providence could give her to enjoy; and with powers to please, to enliven, and to bless? There is but one thing else—we shall see.

I observed Hester at home, where she had no society but her own family. It was large and affectionate; but Hester had no particular object of interest in it. Her brothers and sisters were younger than herself—they could teach *her* nothing—they could do nothing to amuse *her*—*she* could not gain anything by their society; and, therefore, without exactly wanting affection, she found little interest in being among them. She had parents, the kindest and the best, but their attention was occupied in their business, or their family, or the pursuits that became

them—this did not interest *her*—it was not *her* business—and with them, too, she was *ennuyée*. Hester had horses: and so long as she was riding, she was all life and spirits, and enjoyment—but, unfortunately, she could not ride on for ever—and back, at the dismounting, came the *ennui*. Hester had a garden—and so long as there were flowers to train, and sun to shine upon them, she was active, and amused—but it sometimes rained, or flowers were no more—and back again came the *ennui*. Hester could draw—I saw her sometimes set about it—begin half-a-dozen things, loiter over them an hour or two, and put them unfinished in the fire, I asked why? She only drew to amuse *herself*, because she did not know what else to do—they were of no use to her, she never meant to finish them. She was *ennuyée* at the sight of them. Hester had books—that is to say, there were books to be had. If it was a fashionable book that she might talk about in company, or an exciting story that might stimulate her passions, or even a scientific work that she was ashamed not to have read, Hester got through it. But though she fancied she liked reading, it was clear that, for its own sake, she did not like reading, or care for knowledge. She never liked a book unless she had a secondary motive for doing so, more immediately connected with *herself*. For the rest, she lolled on her chair, turned over the leaves, and the subject might comprise the interest of a world, it was nothing to *her*—she should never have occasion to know it, or talk about it,—therefore, it was dry and stupid, and altogether *ennuyant*. Hester could work: but of what use to *her* to work, unless it was something she particularly wanted—it was very *ennuyant* to work what she did not care for. Hester could sing—and Hester could talk—and in company, Hester did at times both sing and talk—but at home, it was not worth while—it was no amusement to her, whatever it might have been to those about her—of course, too *ennuyant* to be worth the pains.

I observed Hester in society, where, it may be supposed, from what I have said, she would find sufficient zest to keep off the enemy. Not at all. So long as anybody would

amuse Hester by immediate attention to *herself*, and ply her with conversation about things that concerned *her own* immediate feelings, objects, and occupations—or so long as, with the exercise of her talents, wit, and knowledge, she could amuse herself by amusing those she thought it worth while to please, Hester was the most animated, vivacious, happy being of the company: but let the conversation, however interesting, be carried on by others, without regarding her—let the subjects, though of deepest moment, be such as did not personally affect her—or in an opposite case, let her find herself capable of giving pleasure to others, but from their inferiority, real or imaginary, not likely to receive any in return—and Hester is seized with a direr fit of *ennui* than ever found her in the country in a shower of rain. In short, when under the excitement of selfish gratification, Hester Eden was a most active, animated, humorous, and agreeable woman—when without it, she was indolent, lounging, careless, and wearisome—in her own word, the most *ennuyante* person I ever met with. With every possible means of happiness, she enjoyed but little; because, as she herself explained it to me, so few things interested her, or seemed an object worthy of pursuit.

What young lady, or what number of young ladies, shall I offend, if I venture to unravel this mystery—to call Hester's enemy by its right name, to shew why so few things interested her, and why life afforded no object of sufficient value to be worth pursuing? I am in hopes that nobody will take the entire character to themselves; but only certain parts and portions of it, with various palliatives and alternatives, that will lessen the effect of my disclosure. They will convict themselves of *ennui* only once a-week, or once a-month, or when it rains for three days together; and thus be less unwilling to believe the extent of an evil they have not extensively suffered.

Hester lived only for herself. Had she honestly watched the movements of her heart from the time she awoke in the morning till she closed her eyes at night, she would have found there was not a thought, a feeling, a pleasure, a desire,

of which self was not the ultimate object. Had she examined her actions, she would have found they began in self, and issued in self—her own gratification, her own advantage, her own adornment, her own success, thoughtfully or thoughtlessly, had been exclusively pursued. Not a living being was made happier by what Hester did, or comforted in sorrow by what Hester said. Had she never come into the world, nobody would have come short of any good they had—had she gone out of it, nobody would have lost anything ; except her parents, who loved her as their affection's charge, and not for any service she had rendered them. Her brothers and sisters would have mourned her, from affection, too—but even to them she could not be said to be of use : she never found her pleasure in improving or in pleasing them. I do not say Hester wronged any one, or injured any one—but I say her only business in existence was herself. She had no pleasure in other people's talents—she found no excitement in other people's interests—she enjoyed no other one's happiness, and shared no other one's sorrows.

If I have said enough to prove that Hester's *ennui* was the offspring of selfishness, I have not yet said all. The Self to which she was devoted was that base, grovelling, perishable portion of herself which belongs exclusively to time. What was the object of her creation, for what purpose her years were given, her powers and faculties designed, and what was to be the ultimate issue of the whole, was not an object of consideration, much less of action or pursuit. What wonder if Hester found no sufficient interest in existence, no remedy for the listless void of disoccupied powers and feelings ! No wonder Hester was *ennuyée*. The purpose of existence and its end cut off, all coexistent beings shut out by the narrow line her selfishness had drawn around her, what a pitiful compass was there left, in which all the powers of mind and feeling were to spend and sate themselves !

I leave the story. There are few. I hope, so unhappy as Hester Eden. Most have multiplied themselves into one or

two, or it may be a dozen beings, whom family connexion, or intimate friendship, has identified with themselves, and thus made objects of existence. If these are enough, and while they remain, there is less liability to the feeling we speak of. But let the still small circumference be voided—let something interfere to deaden the interest, or remove the excitement, and see how quickly it will come. Listen for a while. Do the lonely not tell you their hours are a burden to them? Do the bereaved not tell you they have nothing left to live for? Do the disappointed not tell you they have no object of interest remaining? Let the selfish and the worldly keep their language. Let those who have been fed upon sensation, famish in despair when the world ceases to supply it. But never let us hear words like these from Christian lips, for it does not become them. The purpose for which being was given of God must be sufficient to employ that being—if it prove not so, it is because God's purpose and ours are not one. The continuance of being to the child of God has a purpose also, else would he be taken to his rest: the day's work, for the finishing of which he is detained, must be sufficient for the day's employ—if it is not, it is because we do not choose to do it. Therefore, if it be true that any one has no object of sufficient interest in life, it can only be because they have relinquished the great objects for which they ought to live—the glory of God, the good of their fellow-creatures, and their own preparation for glory; and betaken themselves to one that is indeed not worth their trouble—the selfish interest of sixty uncertain years. Every talent, every faculty, and every moment of time we are possessed of, was given us for a definite and destined purpose; and it is only because we have embezzled the intrusted wealth, and devoted it to Self, that we are subject to this want of interest and insufficiency of motive.

I am not speaking of that languor of disease, the result of physical depression, which makes the hours pass heavily, from incapacity of action. This is quite a different feeling. The suffering then is, that we cannot act; not that we want a stimulus to action, or an object of pursuit. It is a priva-

tion of powers we feel the want of, not the burden of powers we know not how to expend—the case of the *Ennuyée*. Examine the complaint from the lips of prosperity: what does it mean, but that God has given so much, there is nothing to go after for ourselves; and to heighten the enjoyments, to lessen the sufferings, to aid the incapacity, and supply the deficiencies of others, are not objects of sufficient importance to keep our activities alive? Listen to it in the language of adversity: what does it mean, but that, having selected some object of existence for our ourselves, which God has thought proper to withdraw, we determine, in rebelliousness of heart, to seek no other, but to lose, in cold inaction, the powers he has not suffered us to dispose of as we please?

Shall I err, then, if I say, that this feeling, which, wanting a better word, we call *Ennui*, though often betrayed and complained of where the word is not applied, has no other source than that principle of Self, which, in man's corruption, takes the place of the principle of righteousness? If this be true, when Divine grace displaces the selfish principle, its offspring, too, should disappear. And again I say, neither the word nor the thing becomes one who has been hired and sent into his Master's vineyard, at the first hour or the last, to perform the task assigned him.



Almsgiving.

La générosité d'argent est facile ; il n'y a que d'être riche pour en avoir. . . . C'est une belle chose qu'un homme vraiment généreux, car il n'y a de grandeur sur la terre que dans le sacrifice de soi.—DE STAEL.



MADAM,
HAVING frequently been
“ Listener ” for little rubs to my conscience, as well as for
light thrown on the obscurity of my views in many respects

I feel assured you will pardon the liberty I take in requesting, that, in the next convenient leisure, you will devote some of your pages to the feelings and conduct proper to be observed towards that wretched and troublesome race—the Beggars. In giving you a hasty sketch of my own difficulties respecting them, I merely intend to draw forth your comments and advice; and having of late given up the fatiguing desire of *every one's* opinion, and *every one's* example, shall abide by your decision, and be much comforted by a well-proved rule, whether to follow the new plan of relieving the beggars, by giving them nothing, or of strictly acting up to the text, “Turn not away thy face from any poor man.”

For many years I lived in the country; and here, after much capricious conduct towards the race, relieving or turning off every fresh comer according to the fancied truth or imposture of his predecessor, or to the varying advice of every friend consulted, I at length came to a determination that *for myself* it was safer to be weak and mistaken, than to hug myself in selfishness, and call it “prudence;” and therefore gave orders that no poor creature should be turned away from a house where every comfort was enjoyed by its inmates; but receive enough in wholesome food to prevent their suffering, during that day, the misery of want, and rebellious cursing of the heart towards those whose lot was made so much to differ from their own. Well, I entertained (to speak truth) about the average proportion of one honest man to forty knaves; when leaning, one evening, in a musing fit, over the entrance-gate of my little domain, my eye was caught by some large chalk characters on the outside of the gate; and quitting my station, I read, with some difficulty, “God bless the family in that house; for I was hungry, and they gave me to eat—thirsty, and they gave me to drink.” My heart swelled as I finished this tribute of gratitude, and “never will I forfeit my claim to the prayer of the poor and destitute,” was my fervent ejaculation, as I stood gazing on the ill-formed characters, and then watched every object that appeared on the road till night closed in—

hoping, for the first time in my life, to discover a beggar. The orderly habits of my gardener soon led to the disappearance of these written thanks on the gate: but they were stamped on my heart, and after this occurrence, as you may suppose, my zeal increased. I turned into a sort of caravansera an outhouse near the road, conveniently situated for resting the weary traveller on his way, as well as for facilitating the disappearance of poultry, wood, garden tools, half-dried linen, and all those miscellaneous valuables generally dispersed about the offices and courts of a country residence.

I read no more effusions, and I would rather not (unless much pressed) tell how much I lost in the course of a year—how the race of beggars multiplied—how the poor labourers around me either joined the motley crew, or loudly murmured against me—and how every rich neighbour eased himself of importunity by directing the suppliant to my house; but I will confess to have been greatly relieved when I found myself freed from the difficult task of a reform, by the obligation, from family reasons, of breaking up my country establishment, and coming to reside in London; where no one knows another's doing—where there are no neighbours—no tenants—no obligations—where the beggars dare not knock at your door, ring at your bell, or peep in at your windows—and I arrived at my new house in —— Street, breathing freely and securely—compromising willingly with smoke, cries, and groans, to live clear of the beggars, &c. My comfort was put beyond all possibility of molestation by a visit I paid, the very day after my arrival, to a friend, well known in the benevolent and religious world—where, having begun to impart my above-mentioned feelings, he vehemently interrupted me with, “I trust you never give to beggars! it is only doing them harm—undoing all that we have been labouring to achieve. My dear Sir, we have a new plan now which answers entirely. You have, of course, heard of my pamphlet—unanswerable!—here is fortunately a copy left—here are some Mendicity reports—Mr ——'s reply to my pamphlet

—my rejoinder—and a few tickets, which you may find useful."

My friend was summoned to a committee, and with my hands completely full, and my head completely puzzled, I left his door—my diseased vision (which now sees beggars as the Opium-Eater did crocodiles—in every thing) beheld me instantly surrounded by my foes; and fortunately remembering my way, I fairly ran home, being stopped only twice—once by a sweeper, whose services were irresistible—once by a lady, who restored me a pamphlet. I gave them each a ticket "for soup and labour;" and when arrived at home, shut myself up for a week, until I had, by dint of "Reports," "Hints," and "Cautions," mastered the subject, and could walk forth in the streets with all the courage with which one visits Exeter 'Change; for I had barricadoed out the beggars with answers for every species of demand; and it is well I had done so—since never was man so followed by unconquerable women—men in bowls, on skewers, pleading dogs, and deformed children—respectable people turned beggars when I approached, and boys offered me "matches" in the dog-days; but I was crammed with knowledge—strong in my arguments, and re-echoed firmly the cry of, "I never give to beggars."

It was one bitter evening in October, that, followed by a half-naked wretch from street to street, and feeling my resolution failing me, I turned abruptly round, and repeating, "I never give in the streets;"—"Then where do you give, sir?" cried the famishing wretch eagerly—"I do not care how far I go."

I had just reached my own door, and in I hurried—very far from conviction of having done right, with the countenance and figure of the rejected suppliant haunting my mental vision, while her question rang in my ears. "Where then do you give?" might be asked of many who might find it difficult to reply in strict truth—and for those who, with myself, could urge, "We subscribe to the various societies for relieving the wants of the poor—we give to any case of well-authenticated distress—we must keep our

limited means for those who deserve assistance"—might not this be pleaded, that cases will arise when no rule, no plan, should be suffered to stifle the natural feeling ? and it does appear to me the obvious duty of doing good to all men. There might have been "societies" and "associations" at the time when the poor Jew fell among thieves ; and as the wounded man lay helpless by the roadside, the priest might have reflected, as he passed by, that his name stood recorded as a benefactor to mankind, therefore he was such—that his exertions were exemplary, his charities regulated and unalterable ; and the Levite might have required proof of the man's character—might have doubted, as "he looked on him," the reality of his distress—above all, having made it a rule never to assist any one on the high-road, his conscience enables him also to "pass by on the other side." It will be a happy world where no prudence is required—where no counterfeits of that really valuable quality can be admitted ; but, in the mean time, as the true gem must be ascertained and preserved in this nether world, and feeling that it has baffled my research, like a true philosopher's stone, I resign to you, Madam, the labour of further investigation ; and remain, with every sentiment of respect,

Your obedient servant,

DUBIETAS.

"Occupy till I come," is the commission by which every one holds whatever of earthly possession is in his hands. He may have burnt the writings, and forgotten the terms on which he received the property ; but that will not alter the case—they will be re-produced hereafter, and judgment entered according to the terms of this commission. It is hence impossible to form a right judgment of the use to be made of the possession, either generally, or in any particular, without reference to this first transfer of it, from him whose it was, to him whose otherwise it had never been, and by whom it must be restored "in the day of his return—

ing." This my benevolent and lively correspondent seems scarcely enough to have considered. When he found himself in the country, with house, and lands, and money, and time, an understanding mind, and, as I think, a pious heart, as he leaned over his outer gate, had he reasoned thus—"My absent Lord has left me this in charge. It is not my earning or deserving. Why do I have it? What am I to do with it? He will be here anon, and I must give account"—his first step would have been to examine the Scriptures, as the will of God in the use of property, as far as, by precept or example, it has been communicated. There he would have found, that he was to visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction—to bind up the broken-hearted—to do good and to distribute—to feed, to clothe, to comfort—whilst he had time, to do good unto all men, but chiefly to the household of faith. He would have learned, by the whole tenor of the divine law, and especially by the example of the absent Lord, whose property he was for a season trusted with, that he was to do as much good to humanity, and win as much glory to God, as was compatible with the measure of his trust, and the time for which he might retain it. And he would have perceived that *good, doing good* must mean with him what it means with the Master who left him thus commissioned. This would have brought the question of indiscriminate almsgiving into a very narrow compass. It would not be, whether it were better for the poor, or better for himself, to give or not to give; but whether this was the best and utmost use to be made of the property he had to spare, God's will according.

Wanting this guide, unable to determine what is best for "the beggars," my friend has recourse to doing what is best "for himself;" and, fearing lest by refusing alms he should indulge his "selfishness," and mistake it for "prudence," he gives, or orders to be given, no matter how, or to whom, his money, the thing he least values; and reserves to himself his time, his thought, his care, his understanding mind and pious heart, and never misgives that he thus indulges "selfishness," and calls it "benevolence."

And he takes for reward and encouragement, a blessing on his garden wall, which he calls the prayer of the poor and destitute. We have heard before of buying prayers with pence. Woe to the heart that would not beat with joy, while the lips of the afflicted ask Heaven for a blessing on the hand through which its bounties come—that would not hold for nought the applauses of a world at the moment when the last breath of piety asks Jesus to reward their cares ! But the prayer of vice, of carelessness, and ignorance—of lips profane, and breath unhallowed — uttered without thought, and addressed to One they regard not—are those things heard in heaven ? “ Verily they have their reward.” It is gratifying to the feelings of humanity, and repays the exercise of humanity, but it ascends no farther.

Meantime, how stands the reckoning with his Lord ? What my gentle correspondent could have spared of all the talents he had, is not for me to say ; of what he did spare, a summary may be made. All that was given in form of food or money—all that was charged by his servants on the charitable fund, consumed in benevolence of their own—all that was stolen from poultry-yard, out-house, or drying-ground—so much at least his benevolence found to spare. How much good had he done with it ? How much misery had he lessened ? How much happiness had he communicated ? He does not know. Will that answer do ? Perhaps he has afforded a day's enjoyment and a night's repose, to some who will be encouraged by it to spend a year in idleness and vagrancy, and rear their children to the same. He has given to some a premium for iniquity, that will bring them to destruction. To some honest men he may have spared one day of suffering out of their three-score years and ten. To a few, it is possible, he may even have deferred the hour of starvation and death by many days and weeks. It can scarcely be calculated, that he has permanently amended the condition, or augmented the happiness, of any individual among them. This is what he has done. But what has he left undone ? Where is the

honest labourer, whom, with the sacrifice of a little leisure, he might have found upon the bed of pain, and by timely administration, saved to be the father and the husband still? Where are the orphans, whom with some little of his influence, and understanding, and trouble, added to the money he could spare, he might have saved from ignorance and infamy? Where are the children of vice, whose confidence he might have won by well-timed pity, and gained access for his piety to touch their hearts? Where are the children of God, his brethren and companions in eternity, pining uncomfited, except of Heaven, in whose chamber he would have been welcomed as a messenger of love, and have heard a prayer, that might indeed have been his meet reward? All this was done before the almsgiving began. What, *all*? Not one left anywhere within his reach? Did he inquire, did he go and see? Admit that his money did more good than harm, did it the most it might have done?

What moral or physical disability might be upon my friend to go after the suffering that came not to his door, since he has not told me, I am not obliged to know. But this I know. Money is not the only thing that is not his own—time, and thought, and knowledge, and power, moral influence and spiritual advantage—all must be answered for, for all are God's. I will give my friend, however, the utmost advantage of this plea. I will suppose him planted in Grosvenor Square, with an utter incapability, from some cause I would rather not undertake to explain, of seeing, hearing, knowing, finding, or imagining, any misery but what presents itself to his charitable vision in the streets—which, indeed, appears to be his actual condition. What better could occur in such an emergency, than that one should come to his imprisoned humanity, and say, “There are those at hand whose hearts are warmed with pity; the haunts of vice are not fearful to them; the filth of poverty does not disgust them; the infection of disease cannot prevent them—they have time, they have understanding, and they are determined to give tribute of all that they possess—but they have not money. What they can spare is

not enough to answer the demand. Give them of your ten talents, and in pity for your helplessness they will go and earn usury for you against your Lord's return." These are the Societies of which my correspondent speaks. If every individual could or would do all that is due from him to suffering humanity, there would be no need of Societies ; but they cannot, or they will not. Thousands, like my unfortunate friend, cannot perceive misery till it molests them, or feel pity till they are asked for it. If they do, their incarcerated benevolence consumes their very vitals, till the prospectus of a Society sets it free. The guineas are paid, and the conscience returns to its repose. Dubietas, with reason, asks if these have done enough ? Yes, if they can do no more—if this is all the money they can dispense, and money is the only thing they have at their disposal. If not, whatever else they have, is yet to answer for. Be it supposed we give also to every well-authenticated distress. If we have not yet reached the limit of our means, there are more distresses that might be authenticated. There is many a garret, many a cellar, ay, and many a respectable hiding-place of silent penury, where the misery needs but be looked upon to authenticate itself. "Oh ! but we cannot go." Are we sure we cannot ? And cannot we send either ? Is it come to this, that we must take the chance of feeding the full and bribing the impostor by indiscriminate alms, while harmless indigence lies starving, to avoid the alternative of "giving nowhere ?" Have a care, lest the most subtle selfishness be hid beneath this subterfuge of pity. To give, costs us little—to inquire, might cost us much. Self-indulgent nature bids the one—for the other, the feelings of nature must be overcome by duty. Asking pardon of my friend, the good Samaritan did no such thing. He did not fling his penny to the sufferer, without inquiry. He paused on his journey ; he ascertained the cause of his misfortune, and what he needed ; he conveyed him to a proper place ; provided the kind of relief that was most essential ; left him in proper charge, and promised to come again. It seems to

me to rest on the wrong ground, when we ask, if by indiscriminate alms, we do good or harm. The question should be, do we the greatest quantity of good we might do with the sums that we dispense? When they of old appeared to give their reckoning, it was ten for the ten, and five for the five. Had he who was intrusted with ten talents gained other five, would he have been commended of his Lord?

But if I have not yet said enough, if I have not yet convinced my friend, and left the beggars to despair, there is a unit in the great account: the world takes little note of it, and moral philosophers have balanced their arguments without it: but overlooked, forgotten as it is, it is that which must at last decide in everything for loss or gain.

The greatest enemy of man is not his misery. There is a blight upon him more bitter than the October wind—a shame more degrading than his body's nakedness. The tears that Jesus shed over Jerusalem were for her sins and her foreseen destruction, not for the misery that thronged her streets; and when he healed the diseases of the body, he administered always to the spirit too. Man is of another mind. He is troubled to see his fellow-creature cold and naked; but not at all that he should live in vice, and perish everlasting. It is not uncommon, when anything is undertaken to elevate the moral character of the poor, and give them religious instruction, to hear it said, We had better feed and clothe them. Yet if there be any right principle of charity at all, it must be the same in the servant as in his lord. All misery is the progeny of sin. If we foster the parent while we endeavour to repress the offspring, what do we but cut from the bitter root a single bud, and scatter the seed of it to produce a thousand? If "to do good to all men," were to procure for them such brief intervals of ease as our alms could most readily purchase, I would not only give money to the beggar, but I think I would advise him to repair to the next public-house, and buy with it twelve hours' oblivion of the miseries it could not permanently relieve. It would be by much the larger purchase of enjoyment. But if every root of evil bears its fruit of

misery, as surely as the brier bears it thorns, and all human suffering has no other parent, and no other source—what is the principle of that charity, which, in pity for the shivering limb, rewards the beggar's lie, and lest he should go unfed, tempts him to the commission of iniquity? The actings of such a charity are pernicious, by so much as sin is worse than sorrow: and as for the same hours of suffering spared, it may produce a life, ay, and an eternity, of pain to the individual it encourages, or others whom it entices. And it is false in its principle; because the Lord of all, when he gives his property in charge, would have it used as he had it used—to diminish sin, and alleviate its consequences—till he returns to banish both from his regenerated kingdom. To give increase to iniquity, though by doing so we could banish want and nakedness from our streets, would not be to fulfil his commission, or promote his glory.

To act properly and judge rightly, we must be determined in action and in judgment by principle, not by sensation. I think the purpose of God is the principle of charity. That they who make light of sin should act upon this principle, is not to be expected. They think, perhaps, a man had better lie than hunger—had better thieve than suffer. It is the estimate they make for themselves in politer ways—no wonder if they make it for the poor, and conclude it better to corrupt than to refuse them. But they who dread sorrow less than sin, and would rather choose it on their own behalf, feeling for others as for themselves, may find, I think, in this argument, something to make weight against the pleadings of mere humanity, without reference to the will of God.

Humility.

Humility the fairest, loveliest flower
That grew in Paradise, and the first that died,
Has rarely flourish'd since on mortal soil—
It is so frail, so delicate a thing,
'Tis gone if it but look upon itself—
And she who ventures to believe it hers,
Proves by that single thought she has it not.—C. FRY.



N early spring—in that animated month, when all things return to life, but that which returns to it never—when all revives, and lives again, and blossoms again, and enjoys again, except that which blooms but once, and fades but once, and returns to its delights no more—when everything is gay, but the heart whose wintry blightings seems but the sadder, amid the budding of surrounding joy—in the morning of such a spring, I was walking by the side of a stream. A thousand

sand thousand flowers were on its banks, and the brightest of sunbeams on its waters. Attracted by some blossom half hidden in the osiers, many a time I stooped in eager anticipation of finding something new or, deceived by distance, ventured the unsteady footing of the bank, to reach what seemed an unknown plant. When attained, they proved no other than the flowers of every meadow, and of every spring, a thousand times gathered and despised. They

could blow again, and be beautiful again ; but they could not bring again the eager animation with which curiosity examined them at first, or the delight with which the eye of taste dwelt first upon their charms. No—it is this impossibility of renewing foregone pleasures, this necessity of proceeding, that makes the circle of the returning year so dissonant sometimes to the feelings of humanity, when long and deeply tried and experienced, like him of old, in the insufficiency of this world's pleasures and pursuits.

Thus was I thinking, when interrupted by the approach of one, whom from the little tin box, and the look of research, I perceived to be a botanist also. He scarcely approached me, when opening his box with carefulness, "If you are a botanist," he said, "I have something worth your seeing." The treasure was soon exhibited. It was a flower, or, as the unlearned would have said, a weed of extreme rarity. Botanical registers had described its parts and properties ; there were circumstances in its formation extremely curious, and peculiar to itself ; but as they are curious only to the scientific, I need not particularly describe them. This plant had been rarely found in Britain ; there was no beauty in it to an untaught eye ; but having heard of it as a rarity, and of the extraordinary formation of its parts, to me it had all the charm of novelty and curiosity. Pleased with my animated participation in his triumph, the botanist generously offered me a share of his booty, which I transferred with no small eagerness from his box to my own.

It was enough—I sought no more that day. Returning homeward in all the pride of possession, I opened the box to everybody I met, and called at every house in which I was acquainted, to exhibit this wonder of wonders. Alas ! for the vanity of human expectations ! The first person I saw was a lady, whose staircase was scarcely navigable for the baskets of exotics that jammed the turnings—whose windows could not be opened, lest it should blight the orange-flowers, nor her doors shut, lest it should stifle the geraniums. With utter scorn she looked upon my withered weed. Grown in a ditch, and grown in England—of what

value on earth could that be? In vain I told the rarity of the plant, and the difficulty of finding it—she wondered, for her part, why any one should wish to find it. The next person I saw was a gentleman who expended an income of many hundreds upon his garden and conservatories. His ultimate of happiness was to have the greatest variety of roses, or produce the newest specimen of geranium. To him as much in vain I displayed my proud possession; described in terms of science its secret properties, and descended on the wisdom of creation, in the curious adaptation to their uses of parts almost too minute for human observation. He answered me with the greater wonders of his own creation—the strange results of certain grafts and intermixtures—medals and prizes from the Horticultural Society—camelias as big as a cabbage, and roses as black as a sloe berry. He did not so much as drop his eye upon my weed. Hope lived again when I got sight of a naturalist—a man of science—a man who had studied Linnæus from his youth up, and published treatises upon everything. Well has the wise man said, “Pride goes before a fall.” While I was getting up my generosity to offer him a part, the naturalist took my flower, twisted it between his fingers, looked at it through his glass, and carelessly returning it to the box, said he did not believe it was the plant we took it for.

There is a flower—Heaven’s garlands are woven of its leaves, and its blossoms are twined through the crowns of immortality. It is not a native of earth. It was planted in Paradise, and withered even there. Once only, in its perfectness of beauty, it came within the reach of mortal men; blossomed, dropped a seed, and disappeared. The transcript of its character remains: the outward form, the secret properties are faithfully recorded: men talk of its beauties and its worth. But where is the residue of its growth on earth? Who finds it, who values it, who knows it, when they see it?

I have been desired to write upon Humility. I paused awhile to listen and meditate before I spoke. I heard little

that could help me in the task, often as I heard the word. From one end of society to the other, I heard men charge each other with the want of it; but the praise of it fell nowhere—unless on some who gave it to themselves. The sensual and the wise standing ever well with themselves, nothing misgiving of their ruined state, unconscious of their corruption, satisfied with themselves and their deservings, in spite of all that Heaven has denounced against them, charge the want of humility on all religious people in the mass, because they profess to have a better portion and a fairer hope. Every sect and party of religion charges the same fault upon its opponents for pretending to superior light and knowledge. Individuals, brethren of one house, members of one body, cry the same unceasing cry—and whether, like David between the armies of Israel and Philistia, the bold and gifted servant of the Lord stands out distinguished and alone, the taunt, the wonder, and the pride of surrounding multitudes—or whether, like John in Patmos, cast out and banished from the world, the devoted spirit lives alone with God, in elevated communion with the things unseen, forgetting all besides—whether in the flush of youthful zeal, he noises his joyful tidings through the world, or in the wreck of a chastised and broken spirit hides himself in silence from its snares—the whisper runs the same—he wants Humility. Or leave the voice of criticism, and the voice of fame, and speak in secret confidence with the Christian of himself—ask him what he wants most, and if he be indeed a Christian, he answers, that he wants Humility.

Apparently, then, there should be no such thing—or it should be the native of some unsearched spot—or its characters should be so doubtful, none can know them. I thought upon these things and remembered my poor weed. Nobody knew it—nobody liked it. Could I find this flower of Heaven and present it to my readers, would it share the same fate? I believe it would.

It did so when in the full beauty of its heaven-formed blossoms, it shewed itself upon this bleak and blighted

world. What an acceptance did the humility of Jesus find in the perfect pattern exhibited in his humanity! When he spake in that character of greatness and wisdom that was his own, he was charged with pride—"Whom makest thou thyself?" Of God he had made himself man—of Lord of all he made himself servant of the vilest—his degradation was of his own making, not his greatness. When he bent his greatness to be the companion of the mean, and sat at meat with publicans and sinners—then his humility was meanness, degradation unworthy of his character. When he looked tenderly on her who bathed his feet with tears, taking pleasure in the demonstration of affection from one by whose very touch the Pharisee thought himself defiled, then his humility was ignorance. "Were this man a prophet, he would know this woman is a sinner." When he spake as never man spake the truth and wisdom of his Father, then again he was proud—"Art thou wiser than our father Abraham?" And in that last and lowest humiliation, when the sinless died under the obloquy of sin, his previous boast, his high pretensions, supplied mockery for the rabble—pride was the first and last reproach of the meek and lowly Jesus.

To those, then, who are so ready to charge the children of God with want of humility, I would say, Of this be sure, the more you see it, the less will you like it. The more abundant in any character shall be its growth, the less agreeable that character will be to you. That flower you affect to look for, would seem, if you found it, an offensive weed. And if it could be exhibited in the saint as perfectly as in his Lord, it would meet with the same acceptance now as it did then. You would not know it when you saw it, nor like it if shewn to you.

To them who desire to find and cultivate in their own bosoms this plant of Heaven, I would say, Be sure that you mistake it not for something else: and ignorantly rooting out the holy germ, cherish and foster some ill weed instead. It is common to hear people say of themselves, that they are humble before God, but not before men. I do not per-

factly understand what is meant by this. If it means that they are not humble in the sight of men, in the opinions of men, let them remember Jesus was not. If it means that there is no growth of humility in their conduct and feelings towards each other, they would do well to doubt if there be any before God : for there is in the heart of man no barren principle, however slow may sometimes be its growth, and long its fruit in ripening to perfection. Depend upon this —the features of true humility are not acceptable to the world, and cannot be ; for they are opposed to it in everything. If, therefore, they shew you some brilliant flower of their garden, and tell you that is it, believe them not, nor venture to transplant it to your bosom. If they tell you this one is proud, and that one wants humility, till you begin to think there is no such growth on earth, and so are disposed to content yourself without it, again believe them not. There is such a thing ; and the plant that died in Paradise will grow up and blossom yet. Now indeed it is an obscure and sickly thing, cast out of the garden to hide itself in the waste—trodden down of the many, and sought of the few with carefulness and toil—disowned of the wise, and of the proud disliked, and not seldom mistaken by those who should have loved it. If we would plant this flower in our bosoms, or rather cherish it when we find it there, for it is of Heaven's planting, we must believe no testimony respecting it but the record of Scripture, and no example of it but the character of Jesus. In exact proportion as our humility agrees with his, its characters are true—in that in which it differs they are false, and our plant is spurious. If yet it bears no flower, are its leaves the same ? If yet it is bare and leafless, is its stem the same ? If it have no stem, or aught that is visible without, is the root, is the seed of our humility what Jesus's was ?

I shrink from an attempt to describe this beautiful thing. I see it in all its loveliness depicted in the Scripture. If I add anything to it, I shall give it a character it has not ; if I omit anything, I shall deprive it of its parts, and either way mislead.—The utmost I can venture is to drop a hint or

two, that may remove the prevailing errors of those who are in search of it.

One essential of humility is a just appreciation of ourselves. Were it possible to think worse of ourselves than we deserve, that would be no feature of humility. The pure spirits are not proud, because they see in themselves no impurity ; though they would be proud, did they think that purity was of themselves, when they receive it all from God. Neither the saint, who has sufficient proof of God's pardoning love, is proud, because he knows and says he is the heir of everlasting life ; though he would be so, did he think he had the promise for any deserving of his own.

Man cannot think worse of himself than he deserves ; his iniquity is deeper than he ever yet has fathomed. He, therefore, who thinks worst of himself, is, in this respect, most humble : because he is nearest to the just appreciation of his character. And as every man has more opportunity of taking measure of his own corruption than that of any one besides, I doubt if any one is really humble till he thinks there is not a living being so unworthy as himself. From the want of this humility come all that anger, that impatience, that bitterness, that malignant speaking against others' sin, which a growing knowledge of our own will shame to silence.

Another essential of humility is a just appreciation of our circumstances ; by which I intend all that is not within our own responsibility, whether intellectual or extrinsic. The prince who should please to suppose himself a peasant, and act the part of one, would shew no humility by doing so ; nor the man of talent, nor the scholar who has spent his life in study, should he profess to know less than the unlettered bind, and be led by his judgment when he ought to have guided him with his own. He is humble when justly appreciating what he is in comparison with those around him ; he knows that the distinctions of wealth, and rank, and intellect, are of no intrinsic value to-day, and will be gone to-morrow ; and feels more shame for the use of them, than pride in the possession : and takes no more glory to himself

for his endowments, than he would give to a servant whom he should lade with gold to do his errands ; but rather carries them, as the packhorse some precious load—a charge, but no honour. This is the humility the want of which produces so much arrogance and contempt ; the pride of birth, and wealth, and intellect ; and that eager aspiring after them which gives birth to ambition, jealousy, and strife ; all which will cease or diminish as the virtue grows.

Another character of humility is to be content that others should justly appreciate us also. Oh, how slow is this fair bud in blowing ! How long after a man has discovered his own obliquity does he shrink and writhe under the slightest touch of blame ! What subterfuges, what artifices, he makes use of to pass himself for something that he is not ; and how indignant, how abashed, when his infirmities are exposed ! And how long after he professes to despise the world's distinctions does he struggle to pass in it for something—to hide his ignorance, his meanness, or his poverty ! What bitterness is in his heart against those who speak ill of him—though they cannot speak a hundredth part the ill he knows ! What pangs of wounded pride when he is treated as an inferior, or refused the deference he is aiming to attain ! Hence all our haughty vindications, or impatience of reproof, or undue pretensions—hence all those licensed falsehoods with which men cover from each other the thoughts of their hearts, and the secrets of their houses—the thousand schemes and devices they have recourse to, to seem what they are not, and conceal what they are. Humility is the parent of simplicity and truth ; he who is really convinced that he is nothing, will not very long care to be thought something.

Another character of humility, and the last I shall speak of, is, ourselves and our circumstances duly appreciated, to be content with them. Man cannot bear to see himself so corrupt, so dependent, so helpless to all good—not for that he hates corruption, but because he does not like to lie thus low. He cannot bear to owe everything to mercy, and will perpetually be pleading some little merit of his own, because

pride does not like to give all the glory to another. Real humility will teach him to be content to loathe himself, that he may better love the Lord who saved him ; and he will become in love with the dependence that obliges him to receive all things from his Father's bounty. In respect of circumstances, there is a very subtle pride I have observed in people who think meanly of themselves, of their pretensions and attainments, and so might fancy themselves very humble. But they are impatient of any one who excels them—they cannot endure to be superseded—they look with almost malignant envy on their superiors in talent or condition—and fret themselves with perpetual uneasiness about their own inferiority. This is not humility. Witness its fruits—detraction, envy, tenacious sensibility of affronts, jealous suspicion of neglects, and impatient yearnings against Providence for denying us advantages we are not satisfied to be without. Humility will silence these. It knows we have no claim to what we have, much less to more—it wonders why Providence gives anything, not why it gives so little—and having used our talents to so little purpose, it is grateful that they were not more.

Such, it appears to me, are the principal branches of that heaven-planted root. Many-coloured, indeed, are the blossoms they put forth, to bless the world that disregards them; acceptable to God, but of little beauty in the estimate of men. It is easy to perceive that sentiments like these would be sufficient to constitute the *principle* of humility ; and however far they lie beyond the reach of human scrutiny—and they are beyond the reach of any scrutiny but God's—the heart that is possessed by them is humble in his sight whatever men may think of it. To ourselves, and to each other, the existence of the principle of humility, like that of every other principle, can be verified only by the manifestations of its fruits. I am not afraid, however, that these should long be wanting, where sentiments such as I have described are really implanted in the bosom. There may be no flower—there may be no bud—there may be no full-blown leaf—the careless may walk over the poor feeble weed,

and the wise be doubtful of its characters. But let the blessed possessor cherish his heavenly treasure—there may be quite enough even yet to identify its worth. Sentiments such as I have described are not easily mistaken—they can hardly escape detection in careful self-examination—if found, they cannot well deceive, for they never yet inhabited an unregenerate heart; and, amid all the world calls virtue, there is nothing that in the least resembles them. The seasons will pass, the dews of heaven will fall, and the beams of love increase—it will grow up and blossom, and no man hereafter shall deny it—the fairest ornament of a safer paradise. Though all to each other, and each one to himself, denies the claim, and with but too much reason, seeing its niggard growth, I doubt not that God beholds in many a bosom the germ of this celestial flower; so altered in its nature now, that where once it could not live, since Jesus planted it, it cannot die.



Julia Macdugal Arnot.

Rein ne prête plus au ridicule que cette manie de se croire au-dessus de ce qu'on est, de s'attribuer un mérite qu'on n'a pas, de se persuader qu'on fixe tous les regards, que l'on soumet tout les coeurs ; tandis qu'on est à peine remarqué des gens sensés, est que les autres ne nous distinguent que pour s'amuser à nos dépens, et nous désigner comme l'objet de leurs railleries et le jouet de la société.—BOUILLY.



"YOU are a happy little lamb," said Julia to her pet. I overheard her, as, wrapt in cloth and sable trebly folded, I paced up and down a dozen yards of sunshine, better known for such by its brightness than its warmth ; cautiously turning short of the termination of the wall, lest the east wind should turn its corners. She was in the hall, carefully drying and combing, before the stove, her newly-washed lamb, white as the driven snow, and tying a scar-

let riband round its neck. "You are a happy lamb," she said, as she pursued her task, "to be thus fondly petted. Yonder are your born brethren in the field, shivering in the wind, and cradled in snow. No one washes them but the evening dew. The shepherd makes them no better bed than the dry straw, and feeds them with nothing but the fresh-cut grass. While here are you, little thing, living in ladies' bowers, and fed on sweetmeats, and bedded in flannel, and

decked with scarlet, and preferred to such high company. I wonder at you, if you are not grateful for your destiny."

Whether this address excited any train of reflection in the mind of the pet lamb, I am not informed—in mine it did. "Is it a happy little lamb," I thought—"the happier for the distinction conferred on it in separation from its kith and kin?" It seemed a speculation worth pursuing—I forgot that the east wind would turn the corners, and proceeded full to the termination of the gravel walk, to look after the condition of the lambs in the field. They were each one on the sunny side of its patient mother, as she stood silent and motionless against the wind. The careful shepherd had foddered them as closely as he could, and sheltered them round with hurdles; but still they shivered in the blast; the half-thawed snow was under their feet, and the green blade but barely visible—its deficiency supplied by fresh-pulled turnips.

Julia is right, then, I suppose—this is what her lamb was born to. She took it from the mother that has twins; and yonder, with fleece uncombed, and neck unadorned, fed on turnips, and shivering in the breeze, stands the twin brother of the pet. Now is it assuredly a happy lamb, preferred to such a destiny. I returned, and found Julia's favourite gently reposed on the soft matting beside the stove, in honourable company with the French lapdog. But the train of my reflection was not ended. In idea I saw this lamb grown into a large uncomely sheep—no pet for a lady, certainly—and as certainly then to be sent back into the flock, and abide the common lot. I did not exactly suppose that high-bred feelings, or intellectual refinements, wounded pride, or mortified recollections, would subject the animal to months of mental misery: but in the measure of its capacity to suffer, I did imagine it a stranger among its kindred, shunned by them as an alien, unused to sleep on sods, or feed on turnips, and consequently more exposed to cold and hunger than its hardy companions. And with perfect certainty I saw it led like them to the slaughter, sold to the same ignominy, doomed to the same knife,

without care or question of its nobler breeding. Was it a happy lamb?

The decision does not signify. No lamb, since the beginning of time, has been called upon to choose between the company of its kin, and the fellowship of the lapdog—and till the end of it, no mother sheep will have occasion to determine whether her offspring shall be bred in the sheepfold or the lady's bower. While I was tracing the destiny of the innocent brute, I was really contemplating that of its mistress, and many others within my observation. For who that views reflectively the aspect of society in the present day, but must be struck with the endeavour visible throughout it to thrust ourselves, to thrust our children, out of the place that Providence has designed them for, into some other that seems to be more happy, more elevated, or more honourable, to make them something that their fathers are not, to give them tastes and habits above their birthright, and procure for them other society than that of their equals? I believe it is a losing game, even to the calculators of this world—to the heirs of immortality, I am persuaded it is a sinful one, and as such, am induced to speak of it. This struggle to be thought, to seem, to be, whether we consider the stake that is played for, the means that are used, or the risk of the venture, is utterly opposed to the tone and principle of a Christian mind, and incompatible altogether with the requisitions of a holy life.

I know no better illustration of my meaning, than the situation and character of Julia Arnot. Her parents lived retired on a secure income of five hundred a-year—whether originally acquired in trade, in arts of war, or arts of peace, I do not know—nobody in the town of W— knew, and therefore it did not signify. Their income was sufficient for their habits of life, and was the certain inheritance of their only child. Moderate, retired, and religious in their habits, Heaven's blessing was on their store; and they had no desires for themselves beyond their picturesque cottage at the entrance of W—, their garden, their little paddock, and their cows. They had to spare, moreover. They had

milk and broken victuals for the hungry, kind words for the afflicted, and pious counsel for the unwise. They were excellent and beloved : there was no appearance of having fallen from a higher station ; neither was there lowness or rudeness, to betray a mean original. Julia, in this home, might have been the happiest of human beings. Everything she could reasonably desire, everything, I must think, a Christian woman was justified in desiring, was within her reach. Nay—all things are by comparison ; and in the little town of W—, among the ten children of the vicar, and the seven daughters of the apothecary, and other expectants of like doubtful dividends, Julia Arnot, heiress of five hundred a-year, was *prima donna*. And Julia, too, might have been first in better things than wealth. Providence had richly graced her ; she was good, and she was lovely ; she was benevolent, and—I would say, that she was pious—but God has said, “If any man love the things of the world, the love of God is not in him.” The things of the world are many—but if some may be more peculiarly called so than others, it must be those factitious advantages, the whole value of which depends on convention and the world’s opinion. I would rather not say whether Julia Arnot was pious.

I must be brief, for I mean to draw a sketch, and not to write a story. These happy people had no bitter in their cup, but what they prepared for themselves, or rather for their child. They were cursed—for I can call it nothing less—with a desire to elevate her station in life, and place her in society above their own. Was this a blameable desire ? I know that the world will say it was not. I know that from one end of society to the other, from the plodding tradesman, who stints himself to bring up his sons to a profession, to the prosperous commoner, whose chariot-wheels go heavily because there is no cornet on the panels, the elevation of our children is considered a legitimate object of parental care. There is another view of it, however, to the deep-searching eye of truth. If the higher paths of life be the safer ways to Heaven ; if the distinctions of earth be

badges of Heaven's favour ; if the exalted and admired of men be more sheltered from temptation, and more incited to holiness : then elevation in the scale is a legitimate object of desire. If precisely the contrary of this be the case ; if God feeds the poor while the rich are sent empty away ; if not many great, nor many wise or learned, have been called ; if they who sow to the flesh are to reap a harvest of corruption ; if honours are a temptation, and riches a snare ; if He, in whose footsteps we desire to walk, chose to himself the lowest path, and chose his followers there, and left them there, and bequeathed lowliness and poverty for their inheritance, to the end of time ; if this be so, how can the elevation of our children above the sphere in which Providence has placed them, be a reasonable object of desire ?

Julia's parents thought it so. How it came first into their heads, I do not know, unless it was at her christening, when Lord Macdugal, an early patron of the family, stood godfather by proxy, and Macdugal was given her for a second name. In the same course of good or evil fortune, a certain Sir Peter Paulett lived with his family at a large place, within a few miles of W——. His children were of the age of the little Julia ; they looked at each other at church ; they met with their nurses in the fields ; and ultimately, when the Miss Paulets were particularly good, they were allowed to have Julia Arnot home to play with them. The parents, instead of perceiving, as they might have done, the growth of ambition and vanity from these visits, began to perceive in them the destination of their Julia to a higher sphere of life. And why not ? She would have an independence—as much as the usual fortune of a peer's daughter. By a little more frugality at home they could give her a polished education. She could be sent to a fashionable school to make connexion with genteel girls ; they could keep her up a little from the young people of the town ; and no doubt she would continue to be noticed at the Hall when she grew up. If piety ever whispered that at the fashionable school she would learn the tone and temper of the world they had renounced for her—that at the Hall

she would learn tastes and desires their small competency would be insufficient to gratify—that the polish of her education might be at the cost of that holy simplicity she might have imbibed from their example—it was silenced by the plea, that she would have an extended sphere of usefulness, that the favour of God is not confined to station, and low society can never be essential to the cultivation of religious principle. What, then, is low society,—that thing, of all others, a parent may reasonably dread, and religiously avoid? Is it not a thing of comparison? Can any one be lowered by the society of their equals? The children of the peer are in low society, if he associates them with the children of his tradesmen, though honester men, it may be, and 'wiser than himself. The tradesman's children are in low society, if companioned with the day labourer and mechanic; and these again have a precedence, which they would dishonour by association with the vagabond pauper. The children of God—would that they always thought so!—are in low society, whenever they choose their fellowship with those who know him not, however high may be their rank above them.

Julia's parents did not think so. All these plans were executed, and, strange to say, they all succeeded. Julia went to school in London; she was clever, and gained credit; she was amiable, and gained friends; she formed friendship and correspondence with girls of rank and fortune superior to her own; she came back polished and accomplished; and she was received at the Hall, the favourite companion of the Miss Pauletta.

Was Julia a happy girl—the happier for her separation from kith and kin? There were those who thought so. The young ladies of W— thought so—and mistaking the soreness of their own envy for wounds inflicted by another's pride, instead of friends by whom she might have been cherished, and whom she might have led to every good, they became her unprovoked enemies. The young gentlemen of W— thought so—and where equal fortunes might have promised suitable alliance, and permanent domestic happi-

ness, it was impossible to suppose Miss Arnot would condescend. The parents—I am not sure what they thought by this time—a parent's eye is keen to read the bosom of a child—a Christian's eye is keen to perceive the punishment of his own errors. I can only relate what I witnessed.

Every day I witnessed the struggle between duty and feeling—between pride and circumstance—between the desire of being and the consciousness of not being. The demon of Gentility or Ungentility—for I can scarcely tell what it was, that poor Julia's imagination had embodied, to be its perpetual torment—haunted her in city and in field, when she sat in the house, and when she walked by the way, alone or in company, Sunday and working-day—nothing could equal the torment of this merciless pursuivant. From the most frivolous amusement, to the most important of duties, there was nothing it did not meddle with.

Julia had too much mind to care for dress. She had not the smallest pleasure in it for its own sake. But then the dread of being ungenteel—one must conform to the society one lives in. Her allowance ran short—she could not bear to see it thus expended—she hated the selfish and useless purchases—but what could she do? She must be dressed genteelly, and be like her companions. I saw her one day in a predicament upon this matter. She went to buy a bonnet. She had but two guineas in the world, and one was reserved for some more important purposes. There were two bonnets—they were alike in shape, equally tasteful, and equally becoming—but one was of straw, and the other of Leghorn: the one was a guinea, the other exceeded two. She had really no choice between them. But the town ladies all wore straw—it was so ungenteel—all her friends wore the Leghorn, and she was obliged to have it; though it left her in arrears, deprived her of a real gratification in the expenditure of the second guinea, and obliged her to fail in a promise she had given.

Julia was invited to visit one of her schoolfellows in London. This she would have delighted in—but how to

get there? Her father had no carriage—he could not afford to let her travel post. Coaches passed the door—but then how ungenteel! She could not possibly arrive at Lady B.'s in a stage-coach. None of her acquaintance would do so. A similar feeling kept her at home on another occasion. To Sir Peter Paulett's balls and fashionable parties, the principles of Julia's parents did not allow of her going. But Sir Peter was, in these parts, the patron of everything. For a county ball he filled his house with dancers; for an assize, with judges; and for a Bible-meeting, with saints, as he called them—and valued them all alike. It was on one of these latter occasions that certain distinguished persons were to be there—distinguished, it is true, by rank and talent, but more distinguished for active charity and holy devotedness to God. This was a party to which Julia Arnot might come, and she was kindly pressed. Her heart panted to be among persons whose names she had heard and reverenced so long. But, poor child! what could she do? There was nobody to fetch her home but John the cowherd, a decent and trusty man, the only one her father kept. How very ungenteel it would be for him to appear among the footmen of Lord R. and the Marquis of C.! The thing was impossible—one must have respect to the decencies of life, were it only for the sake of one's genteel connexions.

Julia was an active, healthy girl, and had as good an appetite as other ladies; but this besetting demon could not, some way or other, let her perform in peace even these vulgar functions of humanity. There were certain things at her father's table very good and pleasing to the taste, which it was ungenteel to eat, and not polite to drink; but what I was going to notice is, that her parents, being elderly, and of country habits, liked to dine at two o'clock. Julia's appetite had no objection to this whatever, for it was used to nothing else. The first few days I was with them, I could not think why the fidgets seized upon her from the time the cloth was laid till it was removed—why she bolted her food like a cat that fears a surprise—why she sat edgeways on her chair to watch the window—and why

she recovered her ease as soon as dinner was over, like one escaped from purgatory. It was because it was so ungentle to dine at two o'clock. Suppose the Miss Paulets should come in—what would they think? They must see the dinner as they passed the window; or, if not, the house was so small they must smell it. I have reason to believe this perpetual uneasiness during the progress of mastication, subjected the young lady to frequent fits of indigestion.

There happened to be two churches in the town of W——, as there are in many towns. Both had been consecrated by the bishop, both had the service performed with propriety, and both were filled by men of education and character. But for some reason, fully understood only to Julia and her evil spirit, though others might by possibility guess at it, both were not equally genteel. Julia's parents attended at St Paul's, because they there heard the boldest and the purest truth. Julia, from education and from principle, preferred it too. The rector of St Paul's was the more learned and more eloquent preacher—but still St Peter's was the more fashionable church. With umbrella and clogs as she hastened to the one, Julia passed the carriages going to the other, and hung down her head for shame. As she passed through the crowd of poor that lined the aisles, she had an involuntary sense of degradation. She was not ashamed of her principles, or of the doctrine she went to hear, but she was ashamed of the congregation. She would not have blushed to hear it said none but Methodists went to St Paul's; but she was ashamed when it was said none but vulgar people frequented it. I do not say she therefore left her church—I hope she never will—but she went not to the service with an undisturbed and tranquil mind.

One day I found the young lady in the parlour, in deep, and seemingly sad consideration; a parcel before her on the table. "I cannot tell what to do," she said to me. "Dame Wenham is very ill—she has nothing to eat, and they want flannel to wrap her in. I have things here ready for her,

but John is gone to market, and Sarah is washing, and I have nobody to take them."—"Take them yourself," I replied: "it is no farther than your usual walk, and this parcel is of no great weight."—"This is what I was thinking of"—taking up the bundle—"the woman is suffering—perhaps dying—I would not mind carrying it three times as far; but"—laying it down again—"it is so ungenteel to carry parcels—I cannot be sure of not meeting anybody." I offered to go with her, and bear the obnoxious burden through the town, but was surprised to see she still hesitated. "Well, Julia, what is the matter now? We are losing time, and you say the woman is suffering."—"I am thinking," she replied—I am glad to say, blushing for herself the while—"I am thinking, if anybody sees us, it will be quite as ungenteel to be walking with you and the parcel in your hand, as if I carried it myself."—"Then ring for your footman, Julia," I replied, half angrily.—"Indeed, I wish I had one," she said, half angry too.—"And why have you not one? It is very ungenteel."—"We cannot afford it; you know we are not rich."—"But, then, how came you not to be rich? Your friends at the Hall"—Julia now perceived my bearing—she saw I wanted her to say Providence had assigned it otherwise—she blushed, and was silent. "My dear girl," I said, "examine your heart, and see if it is not in actual rebellion against Heaven for the portion assigned you upon earth. And what a portion is it! You have not a single want but those of vanity—you have not a single difficulty, a single care, but those you have created for yourself. And this is the beneficent allotment of which you dare to be ashamed—and you hesitate in an act of duty, lest people should observe that you are—where God has placed you!"

These were the outward appearances of Julia's besetting misery—few, doubtless, in comparison with its actings in her own bosom. I appeal to any lady, similarly possessed with the demon of gentility, without adequate means, to say how many pleasant moments it embitters, how many duties it suspends, how much falsehood and subterfuge it induces,

and how much of sinful passion it kindles in the heart ; my tale runs long, and space is running short.

It may be said that I have painted only the disadvantages of keeping *good company* ; which, admitting there be some, are yet overbalanced by the gain. Julia, with her friends, sharing their advantages, and enjoying their society, might feel herself repaid for occasional difficulties at home.

In case any young lady should not know what sort of happiness she misses by keeping her station and associating with her equals, it would be worth while to describe it. I wish I could. I would measure the moments in which Julia's vanity was gratified, against those in which it was mortified—the hours in which she enjoyed the good society, against those in which she endured it because it was so called—the times of gratitude to Heaven for the advantages afforded her, against those of self-reproach for the sins she was betrayed into—the consciousness of moving in society above herself, against the consciousness of being below the society she moved in—the pleasure of seeming to be somebody, against the fear of being discovered to be nobody. I should be obliged to any lady who has tried it, to draw this picture for me, and I will insert it in some future number. At present I have more serious matter.

The lamb, with whose destiny I began my story, seemed for a little while to have the advantage of his fellows : in one season he grew to be a sheep, exposed to the same evils, and in another shared their fate. The distinctions of society are nothing more than this. Whether it is or is not a temporal advantage to stand a little higher in the scale, has never been decided ; it cannot, because we have no weights, or scale of measurement, by which the happiness of individuals can be compared ; and if we had, it must be the happiness of the class, and not of any individual in it. But this we know most certainly. Elevation in life is no security against its severer evils : in many cases it is a greater exposure to them, and a fearful increase of their bitterness. And we know that, one brief season past, the converging paths of life, so seeming distant once, meet in a point and

terminate. And thus again I say, the high things of the world—I speak comparatively, I mean anything above the point where Heaven has placed us—are not legitimate objects of a Christian's aim. And surely religious parents, who make it an object of pursuit, or even of desire, to bring up their children above their situation, and seek connexion for them in a higher circle, or forgetful altogether of the first principles of their profession—renunciation of the pomps and vanities of the world—all in it that tends not to godliness, and comes not from God. And yet daily for this object, in our Christian world, we see principle sacrificed, peace of mind foregone, contamination risked, usefulness abridged, duties neglected, doubtful practices connived at, selfish expenditure encouraged, the bosom harassed with perpetual struggles against opposing fortunes—for no better object than to gain for our children a little more of that on which a woe has been many times pronounced of God, but never yet a blessing.



A Difficult Question.

Les uns disent : Rentrez au-dedans de vous-mêmes ; et c'est là où vous trouverez votre repos : et cela n'est pas vrai. Les autres disent : Sortez dehors ; et cherchez le bonheur en vous divertissant : et cela n'est pas vrai. Le bonheur n'est ni dans nous, ni hors de nous ; il est en Dieu et en nous.—PASCAL.



REMEMBER, many years ago, to have occupied the corner of the window-seat in a small but very elegant house in Montague Square, during a morning visit—more interesting than such visits usually are, because there was something to talk about. The ladies that met had each a child—I believe an only girl—just of the age when mothers begin to ask everybody, and tell everybody, how their children are to be educated. The daughter of the house, the little Jemima, was sitting by my side—a delicate little creature, with something very remarkable in her expression. The broad projecting brow seemed too heavy for its underwork, and by its depression, gave a look of sadness to the countenance, till excited animation raised the eye, beaming vivacity and strength. The sallow paleness of the complexion was so entirely in unison with the features and the stiff dark locks that surrounded them, it was difficult to say whether it was or was not improved by the colour that came and went every time she

was looked at or spoken of. I was a Listener then, as well as now, and on this occasion an attentive one ; for being not yet a woman, it was very essential to me to learn what sort of a one I had better be : and many indeed were my counter-resolutions as the following debate proceeded :—

“ You are going to send your daughter to school, I hear ? ” said Mrs A. ; after some discourse of other matters. Mrs W. replied, “ Really I have not quite determined—I scarcely know what to do for the best. I am only anxious she should grow up like other girls ; for of all things in the world, I have the greatest horror of a woman of talent. I had never thought to part from her, and am still averse to sending her from home : but she is so excessively fond of books, I can get her to do nothing else but learn ; she is as grave and sensible as a little woman. I think, if she were among other children, she would, perhaps, get fond of play, and be more like a child. I wish her to grow up a quiet, domestic girl, and not too fond of learning. I mean her to be accomplished —but at present I cannot make her distinguish one tune from another.”

Mrs A. answered, “ Indeed !—we differ much in this respect. I am determined to make Fanny a superior woman, whatever it may cost me. Her father is of the same mind : he has a perfect horror of silly, empty-headed women—all our family are literary—Fanny will have little fortune ; but we can afford to give her every advantage in her education ; the best portion we can leave her. I would rather see her distinguished for talent than for birth or riches. We have acted upon this intention from her birth. She already reads well ; but I am sorry to say she hates it, and never will open a book, unless she is obliged ; she shews no taste for anything but making doll’s clothes and spinning a top.”

At this moment a hearty laugh from the little Fanny, who had set herself to play behind the curtain, drew my attention towards her. She was twice as big as my companion on the window-seat, though but a few months older : her broad flat face shewed like the moon in its zenith, set in thin silky hair ; and with eyes as pretty as they could be, ex-

pressing neither thought nor feeling, but abundance of mirth and good-humour. The colouring of her cheek was beautiful—but one wished it gone sometimes, were it only for the pleasure of seeing it come again. The increasing seriousness of the conversation recalled my attention.

“I am surprised,” Mrs W. was saying, “at your wishes on the subject. I am persuaded a woman of great talent is neither so happy, so useful, nor so much beloved as one of more ordinary powers.”

“I should like to know why you think this?” rejoined her friend; “it appears to me she should be much more so.”

“My view of it is this,” replied Mrs W. : “a woman’s sphere of usefulness, and of happiness, and of affection, is her domestic circle; and even beyond it, all her task of life is to please and to be useful.”

“In this we are quite agreed,” said Mrs A. ; “but since we are well set for an argument, let us have a little method in it. You would have your child useful, happy, and beloved, and so would I ; but you think the means to this end is to leave her mind uncultivated, narrow, and empty, and consequently weak.”

“This is not my meaning : there are many steps between stupidity and talent, ignorance and learning. I will suppose my child what I wish her to be, about as much taught as women in general, who are not esteemed clever, well-mannered, and well-accomplished. I think it is all that can contribute to her happiness. If her mind is occupied as you will say, with little things, those little things are sufficient to its enjoyment, and much more likely to be within her reach, than the greater matters that fill greater minds. The companionship of an ordinary mind, a thing much more likely to be met with, whether in marriage or any other near connexion, than an elevated one, will leave no void in her feelings ; and if even she be connected with those she is incapable of understanding, in pursuing her own duties and avocations she will be quite happy without. What we are not capable of, we never want—what we are capable of, we may want and be miserable. In society she will not certainly

interest a whole party by conversation, or convey pleasure and improvement to whomsoever she converses with : but neither will she be sick to death of the company she has amused, nor feel the poverty of for ever spending what nobody repays. My common character will enjoy herself where your superior woman would go to sleep, or hopelessly wish she might. In short, she will find fellowship and reciprocation in every little mind she meets with, while yours is left to pine in the solitude of her own greatness."

At the close of this speech, I felt quite determined that I would not be a clever woman.

Mrs A. rejoined—" You have left my genius in a doleful condition, though I question whether you will persuade her to come down. I will admit, however, for I am afraid I must, that the woman of talent is less likely to find reciprocation, or to receive enjoyment, from ordinary people and ordinary circumstances ; but then she is like the camel that traverses the desert safely where others perish, because it carries its sustenance in its own bosom. I will concede certain yawnings during a large dinner, and a certain dropping of the eyelids pending the performance of young ladies on the piano, especially if it happens to be Rossini instead of Mozart, as symptoms of losing enjoyment where others find it. But in return, I must beseech you to visit with me your unlettered ladies in wet weather—in a long December evening, when you will find them sitting in the dark, lest lighting candles early should make it seem longer—in a lonely country house, when the children are asleep, and the husband away, and the servants are so unfortunately attentive as not to want teasing. I never remember to have heard a really clever and cultivated woman complain of *ennui* under such circumstances—no small balance on the side of enjoyment positive, is misery escaped. But to leave jesting—which, I am aware, is not argument—admitting that the woman of more elevated mind derives less pleasure from the adventitious circumstances that surround her, from what money can purchase, and a tranquil mind enjoy, and activity gather, of the passing flowers of life—she has enjoyments,

independent of them, in the treasures of her own intellect. Where she finds reciprocation, it is a delight of which the measure compensates the rareness ; and where she finds nothing else to enjoy, she can enjoy herself. And when—for such times there are—the peopled walk of life becomes a wilderness, and the assiduities of friendship rest unclaimed, and the sensible gratifications are withered before the blight of poverty, and the foot is too weary, and the eye is too dim, to go after what no one remembers to bring, still are her resources untouched—poverty cannot diminish her revenue, or friendlessness leave her unaccompanied, or privation of every external incitement consign her to the void of disengaged powers. She will traverse the desert, for her store is with her—and if, as you have suggested, she be doomed to supply to others what no one pays her back, there is One who has said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

At this point of the discussion, I made up my mind to be a very clever woman.

Mrs W. resumed—“You will allow at least, that selfish enjoyment is not the object of existence ; and I think, on the score of usefulness, I shall carry my poor dependent housewife far above your self-sufficing blue. And for this reason : the duties which Providence has assigned to women do not require extraordinary intellect. She is the daughter, the wife, the mother, perhaps the nurse—good sense and good feeling, a pleasing exterior and an affectionate heart, are all that is necessary for the fulfilment of the duties incident to these characters ; endowments that need not the help of books or learning. If she be poor, assiduous industry will make her house comfortable ; if she be rich, taste and attention will make it elegant. She can manage her husband’s household, and economise his substance ; and if she cannot entertain his friends with her talent, she can at least give them welcome ; and be his nurse in sickness, and his watchful companion in health, if not capable of sharing his more intellectual occupations. She can be the support and comfort of her parents in the decline of life, or of her children in their helplessness, according as her situation may be. And

out of her house, she may be the benefactress and example of a whole neighbourhood ; she may comfort the afflicted and clothe and feed the poor, and visit the sick and advise the ignorant ; while by the domestic industry, and peaceful, unaspiring habits, with which she plods, as you may please to call it, through the duties of her station, whether higher or lower, she is a perpetual example to those beneath her, to like sober assiduity in their own, and to her children's children to follow in the path in which she leads them. She may be superintending the household occupations, or actually performing them ; giving employment by her wealth to others' ingenuity, or supplying the want of it by her own, according as her station is ; but still she will make many happy. I am not so prejudiced as to say, that your woman of talent will refuse these duties—of course, if she has principle, she will not. But literary pursuits must at least divide her attention, if not unfit her altogether for the tasks the order of Providence has assigned her : she will distaste such duties, if she does not refuse them ; while the distance at which her attainments place her from ordinary minds, forbids all attempts to imitate or follow her."

I here determined to have no intellect whatever.

" You have drawn a picture," answered Mrs A., " which would convert half the world, if they were not of your mind already, as I believe they are. It is a picture so beautiful, I would not blot it with the shadow of my finger. I concede that talent is not necessary to usefulness, and a woman may fulfil every duty of her station without it. But our question is of comparative usefulness ; and there I have something to say. It is an axiom, that knowledge is power ; and if it is, the greater the knowledge, the greater should be the power of doing good. To men, superior intelligence gives power to dispose, control, and govern the fortunes of others. To women, it gives influence over their minds. The greater knowledge which she has acquired of the human heart, gives her access to it in all its subtleties ; while her acknowledged superiority secures that deference

to her counsels, which weakness ever pays to strength. If the circumstances of her condition require it, I believe the greater will suffice the less, and she will fulfil equally well the duties you have enumerated; shedding as bright a light upon her household as if it bounded her horizon. Nay, more—there may be minds in her household that need the reciprocation of an equal mind, or the support of a superior one—there may be spirits in her family that will receive from the influence of intellect what they would not from simple good intention. There may be other wants in her neighbourhood than hunger and nakedness, and other defaulters than the ignorant and the poor. Whether she writes, speaks, or acts, the effect is not bounded by time, or limited to space. That is worth telling of her, and is repeated from mouth to mouth, which, in an ordinary person, none would notice. Her acknowledged superiority gives her a title, as well as a capacity, to speak where others must be silent, and carry counsel and consolation where commoner characters might not intrude. The mass of human misery, and human need, and human corruption, is not confined to the poor, the simple-minded, and the child. The husband's and the parent's cares are not confined to their external commodities, nor the children's to the well-being of their physical estate. The mind that could illumine its own solitude, can cheer another's destitution—the strength that can support itself, can stay another's falling—the wealth may be unlocked, and supply another's poverty. Those who in prosperity seek amusement from superior talent, will seek it in difficulty for advice, and in adversity for support. If I would name names of women, who have been distinguished for talent, I would ask you how many blessings have been heaped on them, which they never heard—how many smiles they have lighted, which never shone on them—how many sorrows soothed, that never were confided to their sympathy! The knowledge of the human heart, the power of influencing it, and the capacity of administering to its necessities, are usefulness beyond our sphere of action, or our term of years: they

go where we never went, and continue when we are found no longer. And though I will allow that this is not a woman's most common task, I cannot allow that what God has given, accepted, and blessed, can be out of the order of his providence.

Here I made up my mind to have a great deal of intellect.

"If I granted your position on the subject of utility," said Mrs W., "I am afraid I should prove the world very ungrateful by the remainder of my argument; which goes, you know, to prove the woman of distinguished talent less beloved than those who walk the ordinary paths of female duty. I must take the risk, however; for, of all women in the world, your women of genius are those I love the least; and I believe, just or unjust, it is a very common feeling. We are not disposed to love our superiors in anything, but least of all in intellect; one has always the feeling of playing an unequal game, without being sure that no advantage will be taken of our simplicity. A woman who has the reputation of talent, is, in this respect, the most unfortunate being upon earth. She stands in society like an European before a horde of savages, vainly endeavouring to signify his good intentions—if he approaches them, they run away; if he recedes, they send their arrows after him. Every one is afraid to address her, lest they expose to her penetration their own deficiencies. If she talks, she is supposed to display her powers—if she holds her tongue, it is attributed to contempt for the company. I know that talent is often combined with every amiable quality, and renders the character really the more lovely; but not therefore the more beloved. It would, if known—but it seldom is known, because seldom approached near enough to be examined. The simple-minded fear what they do not understand; the double-minded envy what they cannot reach. For my good, simple housewife, everybody loves her who knows her; and nobody who does not know her troubles themselves about her. But place a woman on an eminence, and everybody thinks they are obliged to like

or dislike her ; and being too tenacious to do the one without good reason, they do the other without any reason at all. Before we can love each other, there must be sympathy, assimilation, and, if not equality, at least such an approach to it, as may enable us at least to understand each other. When any one is much superior to us, our humility shrinks from the proffers of her love, and our pride revolts from offering her our own. Real talent is always modest, and fears often to make advances towards affection, lest it should seem, in doing so, to presume upon itself—but having rarely the credit of timidity, this caution is attributed to pride. Your superior woman, therefore, will not be generally known or beloved by her own sex, among whom she may have many admirers, but few equals. I say nothing of marriage, because I am not speculating upon it for my child, as upon the chances of a well-played game—but it is certain, that the greater number of men are not highly intellectual, and, therefore, could not wisely choose a highly intellectual wife, lest they place themselves in the condition in which a husband never should be, of mental inferiority."

Now, I thought, I would be thoroughly stupid.

"Mrs W.," answered her friend, "I am aware this is your strongest post ; but I must not give ground without a battle. A great deal I shall yield you. I shall give up quantity and stand upon the value of the remainder. Be it granted then, that of any twenty people assembled in society, every one of whom will pronounce your commonplace woman to be very amiable, very good, and very pleasing, ten shall pronounce my friend too clever for their taste, eight shall find her not so clever as they expected, and of the other two, one at least shall not be sure whether they like her or not. Be it granted that, of every five ladies assembled to gossip freely and tell out their small cares and feelings to the sympathising kindness of your friend, four shall become silent as waxwork on the entrance of mine. And be it granted—which is really very generous of me—that of any ten gentlemen, to whom yours would be a

very proper wife, not more than one could wisely propose himself to mine. But have I, therefore, lost the field ? Perhaps she would tell you no—the two in twenty, the one in five or ten, are of more value in her estimation than all the number else. Things are not apt to be valued by their abundance. On the jeweller's stall, many a brilliant trinket will disappear, ere the high-priced gem be asked for—but is it, therefore, the less valued, or the less cared for ? When beloved at all, she is loved permanently—for in the lapse of time, that withers the charm of beauty, and blights the simplicity of youth, her ornaments grow but the brighter for the wearing. If difficult to reach—like the deep mine, that the light adventurer abandons in discouragement, once penetrated, it will never be relinquished, because it cannot be exhausted. Those who, in the sunshine, amused themselves elsewhere, will come, in the hour of danger, to seek shelter in her bosom, and like the constant ivy, bind their weakness fondly round her strength. And how intense are the affections thus formed ! Would she change them for the small likings of a multitude with whom she has few sentiments in common ? In proportion to the depth of the intellect, I believe, is the depth of everything—feelings, affections, pleasures, pains, or whatever else the enlarged capacity conceives. It is difficult, perhaps, for an inferior mind to estimate what a superior mind enjoys in the reciprocation of affection. Attachment, with ordinary persons, is enjoyed to-day, and regretted to-morrow, and the next day replaced and forgotten ; but with these it can be forgotten never, because it can never be replaced.”

As the argument, thus terminated, converted neither party, it is needless to say it left me in suspense. Mrs W. was still determined her child should not be a superior woman—Mrs A. was still resolved her child should be clever at all ventures ; and I was still undetermined whether I should be clever or not. The little Fanny laughed aloud, opened her large round eyes, and shouted, “So I will, mamma !” The little Jemima coloured to the ends of her

fingers, and lowered still farther the lashes that veiled her eyes.

My paper has already reached its customary length. Shall I be excused, if I, for once, transgress, and prolong it yet considerably? For I, like Solomon, though neither so wise nor so old, have seen the end of many things as well as the beginning; and of this among the many. I have seen Fanny and Jemima brought up in pursuance of their parents' determination—they have become women, and I have seen the results. But when I consider that there is all this to tell, and the moral yet to come, which is generally much longer than my tale, I feel the necessity of deferring it to some future paper, begging my readers to wait for it, before they determine to be either clever or stupid, learned or unlearned.



Easily Decided.

Il faut juger de ce qui est bon ou mauvais par le volonté de Dieu, qui ne peut-être ni injuste ni aveugle ; et non pas par la nôtre propre, qui est toujours pleine de malice et d'erreur.—PASCAL.



WAS walking with some friends, in a retired part of Sussex. It had rained for fourteen days before, and I believe it rained then—but there is a belief among the ladies of that country, that it is better to walk in all weather. The lane was wide enough to pass in file, with chilly droppings from the boughs above, and rude reaction of the briars beneath. The clay upon our shoes shewed a troublesome affinity to the clay upon the road. Umbrellas we could not

hold up because of the wind, and clogs we carried in our hands, because they would not stay on our feet, increased the value of exertion. But it was better to walk than stay at home, so my companions assured me, for exercise and an appetite. After pursuing them, with hopeless assiduity, for more than a mile, without sight of egress or sign of termination, finding I had already enough of the one, and doubting how far the other might be off, I lagged behind, and began to think how I might amuse myself till their return. By one of those fortunate incidents, which they tell me never happen to anybody but the Listener, I heard the sound of

voices over the hedge. This was delightful. In resuming my proper occupation, I forgot both mud and rain, exercise and appetite. The hedge was too thick to see through, and all that appeared above it was a low chimney, from which I concluded it concealed a cottage garden. "What, in the name of wonder, Jem, can you be doing?" said a voice, significant of neither youth nor gentleness. "I warn't ye I know what I'm about," said another, more rude than unkindly. "I'm not sure of that," rejoined the first; "you've been hacking and hewing at them trees these four hours, and I do not see, for my part, as you're like to mend them." "Why, mother," said the lad, "you see we have but two trees in all the garden, and I've been thinking they'd match better if they were alike; so I've tied up to a pole the boughs of the gooseberry-bush that used to spread themselves about the ground, to make it look more like this thorn, and now I'm going to cut down the thorn, to make it look more like the gooseberry-bush." "And what's the good of that?" rejoined the mother—"has not the tree sheltered us many a stormy night, when the wind would have beaten the old casement about our ears? and many a scorching noontide, hasn't your father before you eaten his dinner in its shade? And now, to be sure, because you are the master, you think that you can mend it!" "We shall see," said the youth, renewing his strokes. "It's no use as it is—I dare say you'd like to see it bear gooseberries." "No use!" exclaimed the mother, "don't the birds go to roost on the branches, and the poultry get shelter under it from the rain? And after all your cutting, I don't see as you're likely to turn a thorn-tree into a gooseberry-bush." "I do not see why I should not," replied the sage artificer, with a tone of reflectiveness—"the leaf is near about the same, and there are thorns on both; if I make that taller, and this shorter, and they grow the same shape, I don't suppose you know why one should bear gooseberries any more than the other, for as wise as you are." "Why, to be sure, Jem," the old woman answered, in a moderate voice, "I can't say that I do; but I'm sixty-eight come Michaelmas, and I

never heard of gooseberries growing on a thorn." "Haven't you, though?" said Jem—"but then I have, or something pretty much like it; for I saw the gardener, over yonder, cutting off the head of a young pear-tree, and he told me he was going to make it bear apples." "Well," said the mother, seemingly reconciled, "I know nothing of your newfangled ways—I only know it was the finest thorn in the parish—but, to be sure, now they're more match-like and regular."

I left a story half told. This may seem to be another, but it is in fact the same. Jem in the Sussex lane, and my friends in Montague Square, were engaged in the same task, and the result of the one would pretty fairly measure the successes of the other; both were contravening the order of nature, and pursuing their own purpose without consulting the appointments of Providence.

Fanny was a girl of common understanding—such, indeed, as suitable cultivation might have matured into simple good sense; but from which her parents' scheme of education could produce nothing but pretension that could not be supported, and an affectation of what could never be attained. Conscious of the want of all perceptible talent in her child, Mrs A., from the first, told stories of talent opening late, and the untimely blighting of premature intellect: and, to the last, maintained the omnipotence of cultivation. On every new proof of the smallness of her mind, another science was added to enlarge it. Languages, dead and living, were to be to her the keys of knowledge; but they unlocked nothing to Fanny but their own grammars and vocabularies, which she learned assiduously, without so much as wondering what they meant. The more dull she proved, the more earnestly she was plied. She was sent to school to try the spur of emulation; and brought home again for the advantage of more exclusive attention. And as still the progress lagged, all feminine employ and child-like recreations were prohibited, to gain more time for study. It cannot be said that Fanny's health was injured by the over-action of her mind—for having none, it could

not easily be acted upon ; but by perpetual dronish application, and sacrifice of all exterior things for the furtherance of this scheme of mental cultivation, her physical energies were suppressed, and she became heavy, awkward, and inactive. Fanny had no pleasure in reading, but she had a pride in having read ; and listened with no small satisfaction to her mother's detail of the authors she was conversant with—beyond her age, and as some untalented ventured to suggest, not always suited to her years of innocence. The arcana of their pages were safe, however, and quite guiltless of her mind's corruption—Fanny never thought, whatever she might read ; what was in the book was nothing to her ; all her business was to *have* read it. Meantime, while the powers she had not were solicited in vain, the talents she had were neglected and suppressed. Her good-humoured enjoyment of ordinary things, her real taste for domestic arrangement, and open simplicity of heart, were derided as vulgar and unintellectual. Her talent for music was thought not worth cultivating—time could not be spared. Some little capacity she had for drawing, as an imitative art, was baffled by the determination to teach it her scientifically, thus rendering it as impossible as everything else. In short—for why need I prolong my sketch ?—Fanny was prepared by nature to be the *beau-ideal* of Mrs W.'s amiable woman. Constitutionally active and benevolent, judicious culture might have made her sensible, and in common life, intelligent, pleasing, useful, happy ; nay, I need only refer to the picture of my former paper, to say what Fanny, well educated, was calculated to become. But this was what her parents were determined she should not be ; and they spent twenty years, and no small amount of cash, to make her a woman of superior mind, and distinguished literary attainments. I saw the result—for I saw Fanny, at twenty, the most unlovely, useless, and unhappy being I ever met with. The very docility of a mind not strong enough to choose its own part, and resist the influence of circumstances, hastened forward the catastrophe. She had learned to think herself what she could not be, and to despise what in reality she

was ; she could not otherwise than do so, for she had been imbued with it from her cradle. She was accustomed from her infancy to intellectual society ; kept up to listen when she should have been in bed ; she counted the spots on the carpet, heard nothing that was said, and prided herself on being one of such company. A little later, she was encouraged to talk to everybody, and give her opinion upon everything, in order to improve and exercise her mind. Her mind remained unexercised, because she talked without thinking ; but she learned to chatter, to repeat other people's opinions, and fancy her own were of immense importance. She was unlovely, because she sought only to please by means she had not, and to please those who were quite beyond her reach—others she had been accustomed to neglect as unfit for her companionship. She was useless, because what she might have done well, she was unaccustomed to do at all, and what she attempted she was incapable of. And she was unhappy, because all her natural tastes had been thwarted, and her natural feelings suppressed ; and of her acquired habits and high-sounding pursuits she had no capacity for enjoyment. Her love of classic and scientific lore, her delight in libraries, and museums, and choice intellects, and literary *soirées*, was a fiction—they gratified nothing but her vanity. Her small, narrow, weak, and dependent mind, was a reality, and placed her within reach of mortification and disappointment from the merest and meanest trifles.

Jemima—my little friend Jemima—I lived to see her a woman too. From her infancy she had never evinced the tastes and feelings of a child. Intense reflection, keen and impatient sensibility, and an unlimited desire to know, marked her from the earliest years as a very extraordinary child ; dislike to the plays and exercises of childhood made her unpleasing to her companions, and, to superficial observers, melancholy ; but this was amply contradicted by the eager vivacity of her intellect and feeling when called forth by things beyond the usual compass of her age. Everything in Jemima gave promise of extraordinary talent and

distinguished character. This her parents saw, and were determined to counteract. They had made up their minds what a woman should be, and were determined Jemima should be nothing else. Everything calculated to call forth her powers was kept out of the way, and childish occupations forced on her in their stead. The favourite maxim was to occupy her mind with common things ; she was made to romp, and to dance, and to play ; to read story books, and make dolls' clothes. Her physical powers were thus occupied—but where was her mind the while ? Feeding itself with fancies for want of truths ; drawing false conclusions, forming wrong judgments, and brooding over its own mistakes, for want of a judicious occupation of its activities. Another maxim was to keep Jemima ignorant of her own capacity, lest she should set up for a genius, and be undomesticated. She was told she had none, and was left in ignorance of what she was capable, and for what she was responsible. Made to believe that her fine feelings were oddities, her expansive thoughts absurdities, and her love of knowledge unfeminine and ungraceful, she kept them to herself, and became reserved, timid, and artificial. Nobody could prevent Jemima's acquiring knowledge ; she saw everything, reflected upon everything, and learned from everything ; but, without guide, and without discretion, she gathered the honey and the gall together, and knew not which was which. She was sent to school that she might learn to play, and fetched home that she might learn to be useful. In the former place she was shunned as an oddity, because she preferred to learn ; and finding herself disliked without deserving it, encouraged herself to independence by disliking everybody. In the latter, she sewed her work awry while she made a couplet to the moon, and unpicked it while she made another ; and being told she did everything ill, believed it, and became indolent and careless to do anything. Consumed, meanwhile, by the restless workings of her mind, and tasked to exercise for which its delicate framework was unfit, her person became faded, worn and feeble. To be brief, the parents succeeded in baffling

nature's promise, but failed of the fulfilment of their own. At twenty, Jemima was a puzzle to everybody, and a weariness to herself. Conscious of her powers, but not knowing how to spend them, she gave in to every imaginable caprice. Having made the discovery of her superiority, she despised the opinions of others, while her own were too ill-formed to be her guide. Proud of possessing talent, and yet ashamed to shew it—unaccustomed to explain herself—certain of being misunderstood, and least of all understanding herself—ignorant in the midst of knowledge, and incapable with unlimited capacity—tasteless for everything she did, and ignorant how to do what she had a taste for, her mind was a luxuriant wilderness, inaccessible to others, and utterly unproductive to its possessor. Unpleasing and displeased in the sphere she was in, and yet unfitted by habit and timidity for any other, weariness and disgust were her daily portion—her fine sensibilities, her deep feelings, her expansive thoughts, remained, but only to be wounded, to irritate, or mislead her.

Where is the moral of my tale, and what the use of telling it? I have told it, because I see that God has his purposes in everything that he has done, and man has his own, and disregards them. And every day I hear it disputed with acrimony and much unkindness, what faculties and characters it is better to have or not to have, without any consideration of what God has given or withheld; and standards are set up, by which all must be measured; though, alas! they cannot take from, or add one cubit to, their statures. "There is one glory of the sun, another of the moon, and one star differeth from another in glory." Why do we not censure the sun for outshining the stars, and the pale moon for having no light but what she borrows? Instead of settling for others what they ought to be, and choosing for ourselves what we will be, would it not be better to examine the condition in which we are actually placed, and the faculties actually committed to us, and consider what was the purpose of Heaven in the former, and what the demand of Heaven in the occupation of the

latter? If we have much, we are not at liberty to put it aside, and say we should be better without it—if we have little, we are not at liberty to be dissatisfied and aspiring after more—and surely we are not at liberty to say that another has too much or too little of what God has given? We may have our preferences, but we must not mistake them for standards of right. I may walk in the garden, and take which flower pleases me—but I should be a fool if I trampled upon the rest, because they are not like it. And I wish, indeed, that parents, in the education of their children, would have no scheme or purpose, but to discover and to forward the purposes of Heaven. Then should we not have hour after hour consumed in teaching them what they cannot learn, because it is the fashion; while powers and faculties that might be used for good, are neglected and despised. Then our children would not be taught to aspire to paths for which they are unfit, or to bury talents for which they must give account. The indiscriminate discipline of a school would not be thought a meet cultivation for every cast of character, and a suitable preparation for every sphere of duty. The timid snowdrop should not be exposed to the summer sunshine, or the myrtle to the chillness of the mountain breeze, to satisfy the prejudice or ambition of a parent. It would surely be better that, instead of being taught to aim after one character and despise another, every one were accustomed to appreciate her own—to feel what she is called to, and fitted for, the capacities she has from nature, the moral purposes to which they may be applied, and the measure of responsibility that pertains to them. Then the superiority which now spends itself in contempt for the less endowed, would be engrossed with the fearful weight of its own responsibilities; and the inferiority which now frets itself in impatience of what it cannot measure, would bless Heaven for its easier and less perilous task.

Every character has beauties peculiar to itself, and dangers to which it is peculiarly exposed: and there are duties pertaining to each, apart from the circumstances in which they

may be placed. Nothing, therefore, can be more contrary to the manifest order and disposition of Providence, than to endeavour to be or do whatever we admire in another, or to force others to be and do whatever we admire in ourselves. Which character, of the endless variety that surrounds us, is the most happy, the most useful, and most deserving to be beloved, it were impossible, I believe, to decide—and if we could, we have gained little by the decision; for we could neither give it to our children nor to ourselves. But of this we may be certain—that individual, of whatever intellectual character, is the happiest, the most useful, and the most beloved of God, if not of men, who has best subserved the purposes of Heaven in her creation and endowment—who has most carefully turned to good the faculties she has—most cautiously guarded against the evils to which her propensities incline—most justly estimated, and conscientiously fulfilled, the duties appropriate to her circumstance and character. The more elevated and distinguished character—no matter how distinguished by rank, or wealth, or intellect—may tremble on her elevation, and be ashamed, that before Heaven she fills it so unworthily, but must not come down from it. The more lowly in mind or place, may, with humility, confess the little that she has must be assiduously cultivated to answer even the little that is required—but she must not aspire to be more than God has made her. If we might choose for our children, we should be wise, perhaps—but why do I talk of choosing, when God has determined? To be ambitious for them of talent or intellect, is no other than to be ambitious of wealth, or rank, or other sublunary good—and to make any undue expenditure of time, or care, or money, or, still worse, any compromise of principle, for the attainment of it, is to give to vanity what is due elsewhere—for he who tried wisdom as well as folly, determined of the one as of the other, “This also is vanity.” The excessive attempts at this, I do believe, in some cases to amount almost to sin—certainly to an over-estimate of what is so dearly purchased. But on the other hand, as wealth, and rank, and every other earthly distinction, is

given of God, and must be used and answered for, so I must believe also that the faculties of the mind are not to be accepted or rejected at our pleasure, as if our task of life were left for us to choose—but to be cultivated, appropriated, and respected, in others and ourselves, as pertaining to our Master, and holden for his service till his coming.



The Retrospect.

When a fine decisive spirit is recognised, it is curious to see how the space clears around a man, and leaves him room and freedom. . . . A man without decision can never be said to belong to himself.—FOSTER.

MR LISTENER,



DARE say it has happened to you often—for you appear to be a considerable wanderer—to pause upon some eminence attained, and looking back on the space you have gone over, to perceive you have not reached it by the nearest road. You have climbed hedges where the gates stood open—torn yourself, perhaps, with brambles, where the way was cleared—and, though your object is attained at last, you have sat down, wearied and exhausted, by a walk that might have been easy, had you found the shortest and the plainest path. If it has thus happened to you, and if looking from that eminence upon the way you came, you beheld other walkers wearying and wasting themselves with like mistakes—scrambling over obstacles that are not really in the way, embarrassed only because themselves are out of it—would you not try to make a signal to them, and point out, if possible, what you see, but they cannot, of the ground before you? Exactly such is my position in existence. I want to tell my story, but no one will

listen to it. I have made signals in vain—the walkers are too busy with their scramble to observe me. Unless you will listen to me, of which, from your profession, I have conceived a hope, I have little chance of being heard. You, perhaps, may find the means of making known my story, and will be more attended to than I can hope to be.

Then, sir, I was born between the Thames and the Tweed, and had parents—a father and a mother, and many relatives besides. Not foreseeing that I should ever write my story, I kept no memorandum of my days—journals were less in fashion then than they are now—few, therefore, are the incidents of childhood I can remember. The most vivid traces are of feelings and impressions rather than of events, and these are most important to my purpose. The first, the very first thing I remember to have heard, was, that God was the disposer of all things; the object of obedience and love; the guide, the end, and aim of my existence; in comparison with whose word, and the eternal things with which his name stands connected, the interests of this world were but as the light dust upon the balance, and the opinions of men but as the babbling of ignorance and folly. It was so explained to me in the books from which I lisped my earliest lesson—it was told me so of my mother as I sat upon her knee, listening to the tales of Jesus' love, and dropping my first tears at the story of Jesus' sufferings. That the kingdom of God was the "one thing needful," to which all else was to be added as subservient, however little I understood the position, was, to the best of my recollection, the first thing I knew, the first that I believed. As years advanced, I heard it repeated everywhere; I repeated it daily in my prayers, wrote it in my themes, learned it in my lessons, and from my fond and anxious parents had it pressed upon my mind in every form their pious interest in my welfare could devise. And in now looking back upon my bygone years, I can remember no period at which I doubted the truth of this earliest lesson, that religion was ever, thing, and the world was nothing. What my childish disposition was, I cannot well remember. Children seldom

look inward on themselves—if they examine anything, it is their actions, not the motives and principles from which they spring. But perfectly well I recollect, there came one day to our house what I now understand, though I did not then, to be a professor of phrenology ; and that having duly scanned the proportions of my head, he pronounced, among many phrases too hard for my retention, that I had large Benevolence, an extraordinary development of Love of Approbation, and considerable manifestation of Cautiousness. I remember to have wondered much what this might mean ; and, not understanding this occult science, I cannot say I know any better now than I did then ; but I was comforted by hearing it said they were excellent qualities, particularly for a woman.

My parents—need I say it after what has been already written ?—were what is called religious people ; and though they were numbered with the dead before I was capable of forming an adequate opinion of the state of their hearts, I have every reason to suppose they were what they professed to be, children of God, and followers of Christ. Most of the people about us were of the same character ; and the conversation I was habitually a party to, tended to confirm my early impression of the supreme and exclusive importance of divine things. Exceptions, however, there must have been : for I remember the first time—it was not the last, but the recurrence never afterwards excited attention—that the family retired without the customary prayers, my mother explained to me that some elderly relations being present, who were not used to such things, it was expedient to omit the form that evening, lest it should disgust them with religion. I have a vague recollection also of certain Sundays, when our customary place of worship was changed, with remarks which I could then appreciate, about exciting prejudice in the persons who were staying with us. Some memory I have, besides, of childish wonder at things done upon occasions which were habitually prohibited ; and things omitted under circumstances to which the greatest importance was used to be attached. But these

things were not explained to me ; the childish wonder at a first occurrence wore away ; and without receiving actual instruction to that purpose, I became old enough and wise enough to perceive, that however necessary anything might be, there are times when it becomes expedient to omit it ; and however wrong a thing may be, there will come occasions by which it may be justified.

To the things which immediately concerned myself, I was a more attentive listener : and very vivid in my memory still are the impressions made by what I heard. Upon the smaller matters, whether I was to be taught this thing or that thing, whether this person or that was to be admitted to my companionship, whether I was to go to this place or to that place, a thousand arguments were held in my presence ; and having usually an inclination to one side of every question, it was with no uninterested curiosity I learned, that books, objectionable in a religious point of view, might be given me to improve my mind ; companions decidedly disapproved, might be admitted to improve my connexions ; and that a multitude of things against which many a scripture was quoted, and many a pious argument advanced, and many an anxious aspiration breathed to Heaven, were ultimately determined by my parents to be expedient for the temporal welfare of their child. I do not remember that while these things were passing, I thought upon the first-learned, first-believed maxim of my childhood, to mark how the one thing was perpetually yielded to the many, and the only needful gave way to the much expedient. It would have been well for me, perhaps, if I had—the discrepancy would have been less influential than the insidious intermingling of motives, whose opposition to each other passed undetected in the seeming amity of their combination.

To leave smaller things, the moment came when it must be decided where I should finish my education. Inclination, and my interest, as I supposed, had now changed sides : I did not wish to be sent from my indulgent home ; and with perceptions thus sharpened, did not fail to detect

the fallacy of all arguments that bore that way. I heard the dangers of school depicted in colours exaggerated by maternal fear, and its advantages weighed against them by the more accurate calculations of paternal solicitude. I could appreciate neither, but this was easy to be gathered—the dangers were to my moral and spiritual welfare—the advantages were purely temporal, affecting my preparation and accomplishment for the future task of life. I remembered now the lessons of infancy, and took courage in the safe issue of a contest so depending—when, to my surprise, it was determined, that, all things considered, I must go to school. But then what school? This seemed a deeper matter still. Pious, devoted, and conscientious women keep schools—the child committed to them they receive as from the hand of God—the responsibility to the confiding parents for intellectual cultivation, however deeply felt and duly answered, is less considered than the responsibility to God to nurture them for him. My mother wished, my father would have liked, to send me there. But there were other considerations. There were schools of higher name, and name is something—I might connect myself with genteeler girls, and connexion is something—my manners, person, and accomplishments would be more attended to, and these are much—I had my way to make in life, and had better see something of it beforehand—by living in one sphere, and among one sort of people, I should get contracted notions—after all, they could not secure for me the influence of divine grace; and by seeing both, I should be better able to choose between religion and the world. The many things again outweighed the one: and I was committed with prayers, tears, and warnings, to the chances of a large but very excellent school.

From this time I have to speak only of my own character. The pious influence of my parents was withdrawn for a season—their first lesson remained, but I had learned another. The phrases of my nursery books, the texts of my themes, were still imprinted on my memory—but I had accumulated others also. I had phrases in store about inju-

dicious zeal, party spirit, narrow-minded preciseness. I had even some texts of Scripture, importing that to the pure all things are pure, that for the promoting of good, I must become all things to all men, and on no consideration must allow my good to be evil spoken of. The counsels of my parents when I left them enforced my life's first lesson ; their conduct commended me to its second ; I took both with me to school. Before I left it my careful father died, and my mother was re-married. A greater degree of independence arose to me out of this circumstance, and I became thenceforth responsible for myself.

My first surprise at school was my own popularity. The teachers declared my pious disposition, my attention to religious duties, and love of my Bible, to be an example to the whole house—my very presence in it was a blessing. The girls declared they never saw a religious person so liberal as Miss S— ; though she was a Methodist, she was always agreeable and full of fun ; and, howbeit, rather particular in some things, never thought others wrong : if all religious people were like her, the world would be very soon converted. To complete my felicity, the governess wrote home to my confiding parents, that my pious regularity was only surpassed by the soundness of my judgment, and the conciliating sweetness of my disposition. No demagogue of a faction, suddenly feeling upon his brow the pressure of a crown he never dreamed of a pretension to, set about to preserve it with more determined assiduity than my new-found reputation for judicious piety. It became my motto, my key-note, my byword ; I wrote it upon my heart, and bound it upon my bosom. How I earned and how I kept it, may I tell ? My intentions might have been called good, inasmuch as I certainly intended to convert the whole house—and I fully expected it, moreover. "Religion," I said to myself, "is altogether lovely, and if justly presented, must attract admiration—the approbation shewn for mine is a proof of it. It is a pity religious people do not try to recommend it by being more agreeable. If they would be more conciliating, and not make themselves particular in

trifles, there would not be half the opposition there is. Nobody takes offence at my religion : on the contrary, they respect me for it, because I do not offend their prejudices by injudicious opposition. And then what opportunity I have of influencing them, and leading them to a knowledge of the truth ! Certainly pious people are very injudicious. Our Saviour mixed himself with all sorts of people, consulted their feelings, and adapted his discourse to their habits and prejudices, with kindness and forbearance—so did the Apostles also—it is a pity we are not more like them."

After this manner were my reflections at this period. It is remarkable it never once occurred to me that Jesus and his Apostles did not succeed in gaining the suffrages of the world. *I* did. Everybody wished they were as good as *I*—everybody confessed their errors and doubts to *me*—everybody borrowed my books, and asked my opinion, and courted my approbation. What I said to them it is impossible now to remember—a few particulars only I can recall. When piety was spoken of as eccentric, gloomy, unamiable, I smiled unwillingly, and then turned grave, and sighed, and confessed it was, to be sure, a pity that good people were so injudicious. I disliked extremes as much as they did—religion was not meant to make people gloomy and particular—I did not recommend such examples—but then all pious people were not so—and the conversation ended in my companions wishing all were like *me*—of course I wished so too. When we spoke of the amusements and practices of the world, I had, to be sure, my opinions—but then I did not condemn all who differed from *me*—much allowance must be made for those who were differently brought up—and, after all, it was a pity too much importance was attached to outward things, when God looks only at the heart ; and this talk ended with everybody wishing their conduct as good as *mine*, and taking comfort in the assurance, that at least their hearts were right. If, on the other hand, we spoke of doctrines—for, young as we were, there was no lack of controversy—I was obliged to soften the triumph better

instruction secured to me, by admitting that truly it did not so much signify what one believed—I was not so uncharitable as to suppose every creed wrong but my own—if only our conduct honoured our profession, it did not perhaps signify; and then they wished they could argue as well as I did; but since they acted up to their belief, it was all the same in the sight of God.

All this time, be it known, I did not believe a word of what I said. I thought I was the only religious person in the house, and that all the rest were wrong; and when at home in the vacations, I deeply bewailed the darkness and irreligion of my companions. But this I did to recommend myself—for religion's sake, of course—assured that all must love the representation of the religion of Christ, if copied from his example without the extravagance men have mixed with it. It never occurred to me that they had not loved the original. They loved me. Nor was my conduct less injudicious than my speech. I misspent my Sabbaths, that I might not seem bigoted to forms—joined in every unholy jest, that I might not seem austere—gave into their habits, that I might not seem particular—concealed my religious exercises, that I might not seem ostentatious. Eventually, I found out it was very easy to be religious in heart, without being particular; and when, at the end of three years, I was about to return home, I heard my governess tell somebody I was amazingly improved; the peculiarities of my early education had worn off from mixing with other girls; and she thought I might now make some figure in the world, if old associations were not renewed at home. My surprise to find myself thus estimated as the receiver, instead of the communicator of improvement, was not abated by overhearing my companions speak of me as a dear, sweet girl—rather too much of a Methodist when I came first—but they had cured me of all that—and really now they did not see that in anything essential I was different from others—except, perhaps, a few odd notions, which did not signify, since I kept them to myself. Thus, after all my pains, it was I who was amended. I felt humiliated by the discovery;

and was glad to take refuge in those texts of Scripture which describe the rejection of pious counsel by the children of ungodliness.

I must be brief, and it is time that I be serious. I entered into the world. But what was the world to me? There is but one thing needful—I could neither mind it, nor be hurt by it, since neither its interests nor opinions were anything compared with eternity and the things of God. In this conviction I began my womanhood as I had begun my life. I was cured of my expectation to convert the world, and took up, instead of it, a persuasion that the world could not be mended. I had Scripture still on my side—it was injudicious to cast my pearls before swine—I must be religious for myself, and keep it to myself, and let the world take its course. The world took its course—well had I taken mine; but though my point was plain before me, the way to it was obscured by a thousand intervening objects; and by some strange anomaly, the one important interest never came to be weighed against the matters of indifference, but it grew light on the balance and was overborne.

And now, Mr Listener, after five-and-thirty years of responsible existence, pausing on my course to look behind me, what do I perceive? I have passed applauded and beloved, where the best and holiest of men have been derided and despised. That which in its pure original had no lowness in it that we should desire it, in my transcendent copy of it has had the smile of approbation from the wise and the vain. That which cost its first professors the loss of all things, has not cost me the sacrifice of a single inclination. In short, for five-and-thirty years I have successfully united what God has eternally separated. This I have done. If any would know how, listen, and I will tell it. Little things I always gave way in, because they were little, and religion does not consist in minute observances. When I sat in fashionable company, I talked their idle and often sinful talk, with all the zest and understanding of an amateur—religion is not talk, and any expression of the disgust I felt, would have given offence, and provoked ridicule.

When I lived where the people of God were distinctly separated from the children of men, I would not identify myself with either—religion is not party, and it was my interest to keep well with all. A thousand times I have sat by, and listened to the impugning of my Maker's laws, and the despising of the religion of Jesus, and smiled assent, or looked indifference, because some person was present, before whom I did not wish to expose my opinions. A thousand times I have helped to criticise and expose those to whose piety I might have bowed my head with shame, because I would not share the obloquy their zeal provoked. When called upon to act with those with whom in motive and principle I was united, I have refused, lest it should offend some friend or patron in the neighbourhood. When called upon to choose a friend, a residence, an occupation — religion doubtlessly was the most important thing, but circumstances must be taken into the account—and, extraordinary as it may seem, where God disposes all things, and commands his servants to seek his kingdom first, I was always so circumstanced as to be obliged to give up this most important thing, to accommodate the multitude of minor considerations. Consequently, my friends very commonly wanted the best recommendation, my residence generally exposed me to great temptations, and my occupations, so I complained, some way or other always tended to unspiritualise my thoughts and affections. I could not worship God, I could not say my prayers at home, or avail myself of ministry abroad, without considering what would be said, what would be thought ; and, when my heart grew cold for want of encouragement, and careless for want of exhortation, I could not go where they were to be found, because circumstances made it convenient, or at least expedient, to do otherwise. In my habits, in the ordering of my house, it was the same. The religious benefit of my servants was of course the first consideration—but they were irreligiously inclined ; and as they suited me in other respects, I was obliged to connive at their irregularities, and keep them in good humour, by giving up the regulations suggested by my

pious interest in their welfare. As I grew in years, being very much admired for judicious piety, many young persons came about me for advice, and looked to me for example. Doubtless, their salvation was my greatest care—how could it be otherwise, when I considered it the one thing needful, to which all else was nothing, for them as for myself? But for the most part I was so circumstanced, it would have been very injudicious to tell them so—if by advice or example I revolted them, they would leave me for more dangerous companions—it was necessary to be cautious what I said to them, because they had connexions who were jealous of religious influence—above all things it was necessary to make religion inviting—and so well did I know how to accommodate others' circumstances as well as my own, I parted from everybody in better humour with themselves than I found them, and particularly avoided exciting suspicion that anybody connected with them could be wrong. In great things—yes, a few times in my life great things came to be determined—then there was too much at stake:—God did not require the sacrifice—my earthly happiness—my establishment in life—the keeping of my station in society—my means of usefulness—my very means of existing—of course God knows the circumstances of his creatures, and judges them accordingly. I always intended to make religion my chief object: it so happened that I was always obliged to yield to circumstances.

Thus, day after day, day after day, went by. Think not it was an easy, unobstructed path. On the contrary, there never was a day but my conscience needed to be appeased for equivocation of opinion, and compromise of principle—the words *judicious, expedient, conciliatory, indifferent, non-essential*, were in perpetual requisition to reconcile me to myself. And difficulties—

“ Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practise to deceive! ”—

the world, myself, and God—I had undertaken to please all, and as each stood opposed to the other, it could only be

done by deceiving all. A thousand opinions I asked and controversies I held, whether it was lawful to do things, which to have left undone would have ended all controversy. To a thousand painful struggles and arduous contrivances I was driven, to reconcile the Word of God with the opinions of men ; when to have chosen between them would have made the path of duty plain. Year after year, year after year, went on. If any would know the result, listen, and I will tell that too.

The sun is in the horizon. There are clouds about it that did not obscure the brightness of its meridian. The vigour of life is exhausted, and the activities of health are decayed. The spirits have lost the zest of being, and the quick interest of fresh-born existence. The greater part, perhaps the whole, of life is gone ; and all that I have gained by it, is to experience at last what I knew at first, that "one thing is needful," and all else is vain. I have proved it, because all other happiness has evaded me—because all other favour has discontented me—because my eye has not been satisfied with seeing, nor my ear with hearing—because I have taken of earth's joys, and found their emptiness ; of earth's cares, and found their uselessness, and seen both absorbed in the prospect of eternity. But this which I have expended fifty years in learning, is no more than the first thing I was told, the first thing I believed. Meantime, those whom my connivance encouraged in their choice of earth, are gone to abide their preference in eternity. Those whom I might have warned and did not, are bitterly gathering the fruits of their mistake. They whom I disowned and defamed for the world's sake, are in mansions of glory at their God's right hand. They for whose sake I did it, have forgotten me, but are using still the pleas, and subterfuges, and accommodations, I taught them. And the hours that I have suffered to pass in mischievous discourse, which a word of disapprobation might have checked, can never be purchased back. And the days of ungodly compromise are more than the days that remain for devotedness to God. And now, when I would persuade any one to decision, they answer me, that

I did not always think so. And when I speak with any one of the inferiority of earthly things, they answer, that is indeed very true—but unhappily we, none of us, think so; and though my heart disclaims the ungodly fellowship, conscious memory seals my lips. And—worse consequence than all—He to whom I was devoted at my birth, in whose name I was brought up, whom, at my entrance on life, I hired myself to serve—He, to whose gracious bidding I answered, “I go,” but went not—He has had nothing of me yet but treachery, equivocation, doubt, undecided preference, cavil, and evasion—and nothing remains to offer Him but the diminished capacities of my diminished years !



The Stage Coach.

Il y a bien des gens qui voient le vrai, et qui ne peuvent y atteindre.
Mais il y en a peu qui ne sachent que la pureté de la religion est
contraire aux opinions trop relâchées.—PASCAL.



N a day—suppose it any day—excepting Sunday—I had occasion to travel by the coach from Leeds to Nottingham. I am an Englishman, I have never been abroad, I have no conversation, and I follow the example of my ancestors for generations back, of never speaking unless I have something to say. But nothing escapes my hearing, or passes me unthought upon—a character much resembling, as appears to me, your own. In the coach, at its starting, there were three—another gentleman, a lady, and myself. We met as strangers; put ourselves each one in the position most easy to ourselves, without regarding the accommodation of each other: I pulled up my window, and the lady instantly let down hers, as much as to say, Are you going to stifle us? I put on my hat, as much as to say, Will you give me my death of cold?—and my *vis-à-vis*, as the ladies say in their quadrilles, took off his—a majority of two to one against me in favour of air, decided without the interchange of a single word; nothing could be more in unison with my taste and feelings. The next thing to accommodating ourselves, was to inspect each other. This was performed on all sides without the least expression that could be perceived of pleasure or

disappointment ; and we returned to the prudent determination of not offering the first civility, lest it should be wasted on the undeserving. In one respect, I had the advantage of my companions. I had seen the lady in the north, and knew who she was. She was about five-and-twenty, she was polished, and she was cultivated—I would rather not be very particular as to her situation, lest I betray my original by too close a description. It was one of responsibility, and she was considered a religious character. All this I knew before, and should probably have added nothing to my knowledge, in this interview, had it not occurred, that, after threading various streets and turnings in the good town of Leeds, as we were emerging from it, the coach stopped, and a young man edged his long person into the small remaining space ; rubbing his hands with cold, and vowing it was the hottest day he ever remembered in December. It was immediately apparent that he and the lady had met before. He was of Irish blood, therefore not endowed with hereditary silence ; and ladies, I believe, seldom obstinately persist in it, except in the drawing-room retirement after dinner. Speedily, therefore, they were engaged in such conversation as takes place between strangers who have somewhere and somewhen performed the ceremony of introduction. Excuse me, that my love of description has delayed me thus long from my point—itself may be dismissed in much fewer words. My companions talked of many people and of many things—much, especially, of books. The gentleman was one of those, of whom I daresay your female readers have met with many, and, I hope, have duly appreciated them, who never converse with a woman *bond fide*—that is, from a mixture of folly, conceit, and dishonesty, they never say to her what they really think and mean ; but what they judge most likely to make her betray and expose any folly, mistake, or extravagance, that may happen to belong to her ; agreeing with or opposing her sentiments, not in the verity of their judgment, but as it may best serve the purpose of making her go on. My lady of the stage coach did not seem in the least a match for this sort of

manceuvring ; and talked on in simple good earnest, without perceiving the satiric twist of her gentleman's mouth, while talking of Romaine, Baxter, and Leighton ; books which it was evident to me that he had never read ; but not so to their enthusiastic commentator, whom he plied with admiration of their worth. A passage to the antipodes is not always long : and from the holy of the earth, they fell to talking of its base corrupters. Here my friend was, I suspect, well read ; his large rude eyes spread wider with delight, when he found his lady as much *au fait* here as heretofore—conversant not only with infidel philosophers of other days, the nobler mischief-doers of the earth, but also with their small retinue of to-day—with Shelley, and the Liberals, even Tom Paine and Hone. But he affected squeamishness—he was hardly competent to give an opinion, being so little conversant with these works—he had his doubts about reading—dropped something about their indecency as well as profaneness—perhaps he was too particular—but the manœuvre served his purpose. The Christian lady took up the advocacy, not of their principles, of course, but of their talents—the unfairness of condemning men for opinions—the propriety of reading everything to form your own judgment—the sufficiency of principle to maintain itself without avoiding its enemies. She did not, of course, agree with them, but she had great delight in their deep reasoning and expansive thought, and independent spirit, that defied authority, and would yield only to conviction. She called some of these worthies—the enemies of her Saviour, and blasphemers of her God—"fine creatures," "noble spirits," "exquisite writers." Artfully encouraged by the affected ignorance of her converse, she repeated many of their witticisms, impossible not to laugh at, as she said, in spite of their profaneness.

The conversation passed, and the lady left the coach at Sheffield. Much was the comment I had been making on it in my own mind as it proceeded, and already I had determined to remit to you my listenings, with my thoughts on what I had heard—on the adventurous pride that thus

dared the approach of evil—the treachery that held friendly converse with a master's foes (for doing less than this towards an earthly sovereign, men have been hanged as traitors)—the licentious curiosity that could amuse itself with the mysteries of iniquity. Can holiness amuse itself with sin? Can purity soil itself with foulness? Can the saved laugh round the graves of them that perish, and dress their tombs with laurels? I had determined to write my sentiments on the consequences of a young person, and a female, and a Christian, risking the pollution of her mind by the perusal of such books; and encouraging the profligacy of others, by her defence of them; and grieving that Holy Spirit—which, alas! has a task quite hard enough to restore the soul to holiness—by bidding its opposers do their worst to keep it in corruption. All this I meant to speak of, though little given to talk. But my friend of the coach made the comment himself—I cannot mend it, and with him I leave it. Scarcely had the lady left the coach when he said—to all, I suppose, whom it might concern, for he addressed himself to nobody—"These saints should not be so anxious to exclude us sinners from heaven, for they will be sadly off without us. With all their love of holiness, they cannot do without the zest of sin; and so, when they have done committing it for themselves, they amuse themselves with other people's. Do you see—she can cram her conscience with Leighton and Baxter; but she must have recourse to the sceptics to feed her intellect; ha, ha! These folks are wiser than the world takes them for, after all—more knaves than fools. If she cannot smuggle a libertine infidel or two into heaven, she will want to come back again to enjoy the exercises of opinion, and freedom of thought!"

I leave it, Mr Listener, with you and your readers, to determine whether our Christian lady had or had not provoked this unholy sarcasm. If she herself should read it, it may not be useless to her to know the issue of her conversation.

Yours, Sir, &c., &c.

Harvest-Time.

Oh, how sharp the pain
Our vice, ourselves, our habits to disdain ;
To go where never yet in peace we went,
To feel our hearts can bleed, yet not repent ;
To sigh, yet not recede ; to grieve, yet not relent.

CHARLES.

MUCH ADMIRED LISTENER,



YOU have to lament, if not to repent, the modesty of your title ; if it has not already cost you many a weary hour, such a one awaits you in reading these my lucubrations ; for I feel persuaded, that in your organisation, conscience is too predominant to allow fair play to those keen perceptions, which would otherwise toss aside at the first glance one-half the productions of your correspondents. I am fain to postpone what I really wish to say, for it is a

fearful thing to tell a Listener, who speaks so strongly and so well, that you do not agree with her. It is in a story about planting thistles, a paper I particularly admire, that I still find within me that I differ from you. The story is perfect ; but is the deduction *quite* a fair one, when you consider parents allowing their children to see into the vanities of the world as a distinct scattering of the pernicious seed ? I confess, judging by myself (and by what other standard

can any of us judge?) I feel strongly that nothing but looking at and handling the vanities and gaieties of this world, can enable us to see through and believe their lightness. It is the lime cast upon the field which soils and disfigures, but soon brightens and strengthens its verdure. Could I imagine myself educating a child—a task so awful as to make one shrink with distrust from every plan ever yet laid down, because of the imperfection of all—I could not answer to myself for the effect it seems to me would be produced by shutting out the world's excitements from a young and active mind. Having once given that mind a high standard by which to judge itself and others, I should dread it as most dangerous to debar it of the bitter, but useful fruits of experience in folly. Had it been so with me, I am persuaded, that at this moment, although past the age of twenty-five, I should have a restless craving, an admiring, and yet unacknowledged wish, to be initiated, that would be a thousand times more hurtful than the temporary delight, and permanent indifference, that arise out of a close acquaintance with them. I was brought early into the world, and early into a state of responsibility and power, that both restrained and excited me in no common degree: my vanity was continually gratified, and I had keen delight in the indulgence of my tastes: but with all this, and in the midst of a family party in whom I was blessed indeed, I found myself writing down, out of the fulness of conviction, "that this life, considered without reference to another, was a gift more fraught with pain than pleasure." I never, even in the stillness of darkness, in the thunder-storm, or the extreme of sorrow, have that strong persuasion of the immediate coming of death and judgment, which arises in my mind when I am in a gay crowd; even when I seem, and am, a flattered, pleased, and animated actor in that crowd, still the thought that every one of that number will soon moulder in the grave, haunts me, until I am ready to say aloud, "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised." When I look at others in the world, I think no one feels like me; and when

I look into myself, I feel as if everybody must have the same impressions. It may sound like the extremity of vanity, but I am persuaded, that to judge of others by ourselves is the truest charity ; who, that has heart and mind enough to feel anything, will not acknowledge, that not only their most sinful, but their highest, purest, most delicate, and spiritual thoughts, are those which never pass their lips, and scarcely appear in their lives, because they lack the opportunity of proving them, or feel they would be misinterpreted ? They are reserved for only one Eye, and we seem what others seem to us. Oh ! let us believe that such is the true state of almost all these seeming worldlings ; nor think, that when the secrets of all hearts are laid open, we alone have in that fearful store some which we need not tremble to unfold ! But the severe Listener says, I have overlooked what would be the safeguard against even the wish to wander from the straight and narrow way. I acknowledge, with the truest conviction, the necessity of "stretching nature on the cross of Christ ;" but it must be, humanly speaking, a voluntary crucifixion—or it will but wither that nature it is our duty to exalt and refine to the highest ends. I know I seem to write and think arrogantly of human nature, my own of course included ; and yet it is to its folly and vileness that I trust as the antidote to its influence. And now, earnestly hoping you may never know your impertinent correspondent, I remain your admiring, fearing, and reverencing

QUALIFIER.

WHEN I received the above paper, I was by the sea-side. I read it attentively, and having folded it up, thoughtfully pursued my walk. I passed the fisherman at the water's-edge, waiting the flowing of the tide ; but not idly. His children were helping him to unfold and mend his nets, and two or three stockingless brats were wading through the water to unmoor the boat, and steer it as he directed them. I saw, in the hollow of the cliff, a group of gipsies boiling

the turnips they had stolen the night before. These, too, were training their children to their own calling. The little brutes lay squalling and fighting on the pathway ; the father bade them, with a fearful oath, to cease their brawling, and draw him some sticks from a neighbouring fence. I came to the door of a large barn : a clean and decent husbandman was thrashing out the corn ; and his son, with the same hard features as himself, the same nailed boots, and tidy round frock, was at his side, helping, with a lighter flail, the father's labours. I reached the mansion of nobility. I saw the heir, with his reverend tutor at his side, the future dignitary, probably, of the church, engaged in such pursuits, and receiving such accomplishments, as would become the master of that proud domain.

“ These people are all in the wrong, then,” I said. “ Each one is preparing his children to follow his own calling, and fill the station of his fathers, the destiny for which he seems designed. But they take the wrong methods. The honest labourer should apprentice his boy to the rude waters, and let him spend his childhood amid the animating perils of the sea, that he may be fit, in manhood, for the sober drudgery of the day's work, and love the safety of the shore. The fisherman—he should send his brats amid yonder trampers, to be reared in idleness, villainy, and theft, that he may learn the value of an honest calling, and be fitted for the exertions of laborious life. And the young noble—he, methinks, should serve apprenticeship to all. In the coarse labours and habits of the husbandman, he should prepare himself for the refinements of his condition, and in the miseries of vicious idleness get experience of the beauty and happiness of moral elevation. How else should they have a choice ? How, but in the experience of vice, can they learn its miseries, of idleness its consequences, of coarseness its disgusts ? What, in short, would make a human being fit for any station, but bringing him up in bitter experience of its opposite ? ”

When I read the above letter first I had a mind not to insert it, or seriously to answer it. I thought my excellent

correspondent was in a worse condition than poor Hodge. She seemed to have taken her thistles into great admiration ; and though she had gathered of them hitherto but fading flowers and thorns, was disposed to believe, since the roots were under ground, they might after all be very good roots, and should not be disturbed. I thought, besides, that though I had ridiculed the husbandman who sowed the harvest that he would not reap, if any one had ground, and that ground was his own, and he could please himself, while others gathered in their corn, and filled their garners, his own remaining empty, to stand by, and moralise upon the lightness of the thistle-down, the spiny hardness of the leaves, and fading beauty of the flowers, boasting his experience of their worthlessness—I thought I had nothing to say in this case, why a man should not plant thistles to his dying day. But afterwards there came a thought that checked my mirth and seemed to reprove my indifference. I found, that in one respect, my correspondent had spoken truth : "The deduction" from the story was "not quite a fair one," for the cases were not analogous. I had supposed the good man's field to be his own ; whence, though I deduced his folly in planting thistles where he would gather corn, I yet left him free to choose the harvest he preferred. But if, in fact, that field had been another's, and the possessor held it only on lease or sufferance, till the owner should reclaim it, the deduction should have been other than it was. I consent to amend my story ; though I would still avoid discussing what I before supposed to be granted—the general inadmissibility of worldly amusements to a religious life. And for this reason. The subject is discussed everywhere, and between everybody : arguments are worn threadbare, and little good comes of it. The earthly-minded go on with their amusements, not because they know them to be harmless, but because they mean to enjoy them whether they are or not. The pretender to religion talks a great deal against them, not for dread of their unholiness, but because the sacrifice costs less, and shews more, than the abridgement of selfishness in other forms. The child of God leaves them,

and forgets them, not because he is scared from his desires by the potency of argument, but because he has no taste, nor time, nor heart for such vain foolery. This course will continue, I apprehend, after all our discussions. And if there is a class of persons, as among our younger Christians, I believe there may be, who are really wishing to know how to adjust the claims of Heaven and the claims of earth; the love of holiness, with the countenance of sin; the presence of Jesus, with the society of his despisers; the peculiarities of the gospel, with the habits of polite life; the commands of God, with the approbation of the world; destinies entirely opposite, with the least possible division by the way; entire, radical and eternal difference of principle, with the least possible difference of life and conversation—to these, perhaps, an admonition might be in the stead of argument. You have taken to yourselves a most onerous task; but it is none of Heaven's imposing. God has not required it at your hands. There are commands innumerable to choose between the one thing and the other, but none to reconcile them.

This by the way. My correspondent is not of the number, I believe. Could I even hope, by any argument of mine, to convince her of the erroneousness of her sentiments, if they were only hers, I should still be unwilling to discuss them here. But I am informed, and, indeed, if I did not know it, I should have listened these many years in vain, that she speaks the thoughts of numbers of others, of young females in particular, who mistake feelings for principles, and sentiment for piety; and think themselves very religious, because they sigh over the vanity of earthly things, though they seek them not the less; and shudder at the thought of death and judgment, though they prepare for them not the more; and in times of depression, take refuge in some idea of God, though they know him not, and serve him not the better. For the sake of these, I have determined on replying to the letter. I do not guess the writer, and if I did, all personality is put aside. I answer to all those who hold a similar language, or cherish the like sentiments, not to my individual

correspondent. She will, therefore, I trust, forgive the criticism of her words.

My correspondent claims to have the question judged by her own experience, and the effect of vanity and folly upon herself. Is she quite sure she knows herself, and at "past five-and-twenty" has come to the full fruition of her early culture? If so, I will receive her testimony of herself, and fill up the deficient outline as justly as I can. I will suppose her name to be Amelia, and understand that she is now past five-and-twenty. I will suppose that Amelia was "brought early into the world," that is, into fashionable amusements, and the gaieties of life—perhaps as early as seventeen—this allows her full eight years' experience in them. She was handsome, of course, or her vanity would not have been so largely administered to—she was in prosperity, or her tastes could not have been so fully indulged—she was amiable, or she would not have been so happy and so much beloved in her family circle. Every capability of pleasure was thus bestowed on her; and she had the advantage of being allowed to gather unrestrained, what she considers "the bitter but useful fruits of experience in folly." It is not unfair to assert that she spent the greater part of her time in collecting them. The "continual" gratification of her vanity, and her "keen" delight in the indulgence of her taste, imply that these early years were passed in pursuit of self-gratification in some form or other. Amelia is no uncommon character, and we are in the less danger of sketching her amiss. She was brought up for the world: when presented to it she found acceptance in its sight; and she has spent the first years of womanhood in doing its pleasure and her own, unarrested by a voice that said, "She that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth."

And what is Amelia now? After eight years' assiduous labour in folly and fashion's bondage, she questions the value of their wages, and writes down, "out of the fulness of conviction," that "life is a gift more fraught with pain than pleasure." *Blasée* of the gratifications of sense, and familiar, I dare say, with Young's *Night Thoughts*, Harvey's

Meditations, and other good books, she invokes the interest of another world to renew the excitement of feeling this can afford no longer. The conjured spirit, however, proves an importunate adjunct to the still fashionable lady. Not content with its appropriate seasons, "the stillness of darkness, the thunder-storm, and the extreme of sorrow," it follows her to the gay crowd, pictures to her fancy her fair companions mouldering in the grave, sounds in her ear the trumpet-call to judgment, turns the lightness of comedy into the sublime of tragedy, the thoughtlessness of mirth to the poetry of sentiment. If I mistake the case, *Amelia* must forgive. It is all she has disclosed. She has told me that when she became dissatisfied with the wages of folly, she forsook its service. She has not told me that thoughts of death and judgment in the crowd sent her to solitude, penitence, and prayer. Would she had told me how many of that giddy crowd were arrested in the dance of folly by her example, and won, by her timely warnings, to prepare for the change she so shuddered to think upon! Would that she had said how often and how bitterly before God she mourned her own wasted years and accumulated sins, her Lord's neglected and forgotten service! Then I might have perceived "the usefulness" as well as the "bitterness" of her eight years' harvest. On the contrary, she states the result of all to be "temporary delight and permanent indifference." She justifies the expenditure in folly of five-and-twenty years out of her brief threescore, and she speaks of herself as a still "flattered," still "pleased," and still "animated actor," in the gay crowd. She describes, I fear, but too correctly, the character of her piety—"It never passes the lips, and scarcely appears in the life." And *Amelia* forgets the word that says,—"These three years have I come seeking fruit, and find none; cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"

This is what *Amelia* is. May I imagine also, what she will be, when her five-and-twenty years are doubled, if neither wrath nor mercy interpose? This reference to things divine, which she takes to be religion, but which is,

in fact, no other than sentiment—the *pis aller* of unsatisfied feeling—the last chapter of a long romance, very dull, but necessary to conclude the story—this will die with the vivacity of youthful feeling: imagination will cease to present its images of mortality; the vivid impressions of futurity will wear fainter and fainter; the chill of advancing age will wither these, as it withers every other growth of feeling—flowers of one root, the sweep of indifference will involve them all. But the sullen root of habit will remain. Folly never was, never can be, its own cure. It were as wise to expect the rugged thistle, by longer growing, should produce us corn. Every indulgence of evil adds to its power, and fastens another fetter on its slave, as certainly as the weed by every blossom multiplies its growth. Pleasures, no longer loved, will be pursued from habit—fashion's drudgery will be done when its wages are denied—the wearied limbs and faded cheek will be exhibited when flattery is silent. If any doubt it, let them look at the septuagenarians of folly, nodding the plumes upon their palsied heads, as it were in insane mimicry of those that tomorrow will nod upon their hearse. Death and judgment, imagination's playthings now, as they approach, will become hideous phantoms, which must be either dreaded or forgotten. A rigid observance of exterior forms, an equivocal profession of religion, perhaps, will take the place of extinguished sentiment. And when the secrets of Amelia's heart are opened, that moment so confidently challenged, and the reckoning is demanded for her talents—for fifty years' exercise of physical and mental powers—for the use of prosperity, the influence of beauty, the abundance of domestic blessings—there will be nothing found for God but a few pious sentiments, a few poetic feelings, a few convictions of conscience, just enough to prove she knew the worthlessness of that world whose service she preferred to His. The rest had been expended upon earth and upon herself.

If I have not drawn the character of my correspondent, I have drawn that of thousands. Let it stand as theirs, not

hers. If any parent would gather such a harvest, let her sow the ungodly seed. The Listener has not interposed; although, perhaps, he should. Perhaps he should have said that Hodge omitted to consult the tenure by which he held his field, and the forfeiture under which he was bound to cultivate it properly. I can anticipate but one other result of early introduction to the ways of vanity and folly. It has been come to by some—would it might by all! When the harvest-time of maturity has come, and the children of godliness have been seen gathering in their store—the stores of a conscience void of offence before God—the Spirit witnessing with their spirit that they are his children—the near prospect of a blissful immortality—the soul's peaceful elevation above the changes of the world—the sufficiency of bliss without its smiles—while, with treasures like these, the followers of Jesus are seen filling their garners, the disappointed, dissipated child of folly has sometimes looked into her bosom, and found it empty—without present good or future expectation, has looked back upon her past life to see what fruits it could produce, and found none. Now she perceives the cause, and now she embraces the remedy. But, oh! the poverty of these moments—the bitter retrospect of wasted years—the burden of accumulated sin—the inveteracy of habit, returning in spite of every effort to eradicate it. The chains of the world are broken indeed, but they hang clattering about the neck with scarcely diminished weight. Folly takes advantage of its intimacy to gain access to the bosom, and wins with the accents of our native tongue. After a life of thoughtlessness, how difficult to think—how difficult to feel, after the feelings have been blunted and expended—to act, after a life of indolence! Not only can the past years never be recovered, but many a one to come will be expended in painful contention between inveterate habit and determined principle, in joyless and vacillating faith, unsanctified and inconsistent conduct. Such is not the harvest a pious mother desires for her child.

A few things I would say to my correspondent before we

part, in affectionate desire for her welfare. She shrinks from every plan of education, because of its imperfections. Here is a system that has no imperfections—"Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." I know of no "safeguard from the wish to err." On the contrary, I know that the whole tendency of the heart of man is to evil, from his birth-time to his dying hour; that he can be turned from it only by supernatural power; and if by wilfully exposing himself to temptation, he provokes the withdrawal of that power, he will return to evil as to his own element. I know of no nature of ours which it is our duty to exalt and refine—though I have heard of one we are to mortify and put to death. With respect to "stretching nature on the cross of Christ," I am not sure that I know what it means. But there is another sentence that sounds something like it—this I understand—"The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." The religion of Jesus requires the subjection of all earthly and selfish preference, and the conformity of every feeling and faculty to his holy will and service.



Disappointments.

On ne perd pas seulement le temps en ne faisant rien, ou en faisant le mal, mais on le perd aussi en faisant autre chose que ce que l'on devrait, quoique ce que l'on fait soit bon.—FENELON.



T was the law of Egypt, that every subject of the kingdom was, under pain, I think, of death, to follow the calling of his fathers. Whether this was a wise law I know not. But there is another kingdom, wherein all is wise, of which it is a law, if I mistake not the statute-book, that every one should follow diligently his own calling. Of course, it could not be in either of these kingdoms the following events occurred, as taken in short-hand by a

listener, from the lips of the unfortunate narrator :—

“ When I first became sensible of religious impressions, I was eighteen years of age. I had been politely brought up, had learned a great deal, and knew but very little—least of anything did I know myself. Next to myself, what I knew least of was my fellow-creatures. I had always resided with my grandmother, and had little intercourse but with my governess, a few distant relatives, and two or three genteel girls of my own standing in society. My grandmother was an old-fashioned Christian. That she was one, the more I learn of religion, the more I am convinced, though at one

time I doubted it. She had become so at a time when they were indeed the despised few, or only not despised because they were unheard of: when all they could do for the world was to sit apart and pray for it, and all they could do for themselves was to withdraw from its influences. I speak of a Christian of sixty years ago. When I knew her she was too old to receive any new impressions. Her mind had but little cultivation. I never saw her read anything but the newspaper, Baxter, and the Bible. She seldom talked of religion, but she lived it every moment. Of the public demonstrations of piety so prevalent in our time, she contented herself with saying, 'There were no such things in her day.' This retired piety, beautiful as it appears to me in the retrospect, was attended with considerable disadvantage to myself. Very little pains were taken to instruct my mind in the principles which hers reposed in. Having received them without human agency, she, perhaps, conceived it impossible to impart them. An education distinct and separate from the world, was among 'the things not heard of in her day.' I was brought up like other girls and by other people. Her care was but to pray for me; which she did with unwearyed earnestness, in holy trust and confidence, I know most certainly; and to her prayers, perhaps, the blessings that I received were granted. In her journal I found many an earnest petition for the correction of faults she never reproved in me, and pardon for my iniquities at the time that she seemed to think me all perfection, and allowed me to think myself so.

"When, therefore, I became, on my approach to womanhood, strongly imbued with religious feeling, not having received the impressions from my grandmother, it was not to her I looked for example or advice. I doubted, indeed, the reality of her religion, because it was of a character so different from what I saw elsewhere. Elsewhere, therefore, I sought for counsel. She allowed me to go on un thwarted in good, as before in folly; and I began my course in all the confidence of a spirit yet untried, and all the fervour of,

I believe, an honest, though a new-born purpose. I did not want advisers. As soon as my inclination to seriousness was perceived, I was taken up by some leading people in the religious world, as it is called, and introduced from one to another as a promising character, requiring to be led forward. I was an heiress—nobody knew to what, nor did I—but on some unexplained understanding that I was in a capacity to receive and do a great deal of good, I became a person of importance in my sphere—among people whose attentions to me, whatever may have been their effect, had no motive but to promote my welfare. I was taken from party to party, and church to church, and meeting to meeting, in a perpetual round of religious dissipation. Nothing could be more delightful to me than this hurry of pious occupation: for, besides that I had a real and ardent pleasure in listening to the things of God, and an honest desire to learn, there was in it a contrast to the monotony of my home, naturally pleasing to the youthful mind. I had been to a ball about six times in my life; I had yawned through a tea-party about once a fortnight; I had driven round the parks for an hour every day: all the rest of my time I have been thrown upon my own resources, which were few enough, and the society of my grandmother, or that of about half-a-dozen intimates of my own age. But now there was somewhere to go every night—somebody to hear every morning—somebody to see—somebody to be introduced to everywhere; mingled all with the stimulus of first-awakened feeling, as new as it was delightful; for I was too young to have tasted of the excitements of earthly passion. My dear old grandmother looked on with a surprise that excited my mirth; and with an anxiety which, though I then perceived it not, I think of now with pain. Sometimes she ventured a complaint that the regularity of her house was destroyed—the family prayer at nine o'clock was unattended, because the servants were out with the carriage—they were sent hither and thither she knew not where—all sorts of people came about, she knew not whom—I was never at liberty to bear her company: or rather to sit silent by her side, which

she so called. She never thought to see such fashionable doings in her house. Still I was to do as I liked; only things were not so in her day, when girls of eighteen stayed at home, read their books, and were happy with their parents.

"This went on a considerable time. But there was too much of the light of truth upon my mind, not to shew me, after a while, that, however much I was gaining for myself, I was doing no good to anybody else. A spare shilling in the collection-box was all that was rendered for what I considered the much received; and I became uneasy under the first perception, that selfishness, that one great principle of nature's sin, is selfish still, whichever way indulged. I might have taken into account, also, the actual privation and discomfort of my grandmother and her household, as the cost of my indulgence. Eagerly, and I believe again with honest purpose, I began to ask everybody what I could do. I saw others doing, why should I be useless in my generation? Alas! had any one of my kind friends looked into my mind, and, seeing how light, how empty, how ignorant it was, advised me to devote the next five years to mental improvement, and the study of myself, what defeat and disappointment had they spared me! But this they did not. My desire to do good was much approved, and many ways were suggested to me. I was taken to see a school, where I found a lady surrounded by fifty neatly-dressed girls, hanging with fixed attention upon her words, gazing on her with mingled reverence and love, their little countenances seeming to gather the benevolence that beamed in hers. She was above twice my age. A calm and sober serenity of manner, a voice of tender interest, gave force to all she said. The simplicity of her expressions was only equalled by the correctness and carefulness of the thoughts she clothed in them. It seemed that, knowing everything, she remembered when she had known nothing; and from the depths of experienced truth, could reach the heart that had yet experienced nothing. There was not a whisper among her audience, but when they responded to her questions, and shewed, in doing so, the

extent and importance of the knowledge she had imparted. My heart burned within me to do the same—to be the instrument of Heaven's mercy to the children of poverty. Why should I not teach? Why should I not have schools? A thousand projects were afloat in my head, and not a single misgiving of my powers was in my heart. I knew I should not be restricted in pecuniary means, and returned home full of elevation in the prospect of being useful. So full, I could not help telling my grandmother I was going to teach a school. She only answered me with something that was not quite a sigh, 'God bless you, dear child, and teach *you* in his own good time.' It must be owned my spirit fell for a moment at this contemptuous speech, as I esteemed it; but my respect for the old lady's piety had long since expired; and my respect for her judgment was ready to follow, whenever it should come in contact with my own. I soon recovered my self-complacency, and the next day prepared for my task—prepared to teach, at a time when I knew absolutely nothing; not God, for it was but little time that he had been to me even an object of inquiry; not his Word, for as yet I had studied it but little; not myself, nor the beings I was to instruct, for the examination of my own heart had made no part of my religious exercises; and in everything my mind was so uncultivated, and so habitually unexercised, I had no faculty of communicating knowledge, or facility in receiving it. Whether any among those who were my advisers could have perceived this, I do not know. I could not. My grandmother's wash-house was quickly fitted up with forms—children were collected—new books and clean white pinafores were provided for them. All my friends in succession were brought to see my school, and I was kindly congratulated on being the instrument of so much good. The good, however, was the only thing that never appeared—and though I so long expected it would come, I was not so deluded by vanity as to suppose it did. When the novelty was over, the children ceased to attend, though I bribed them with all manner of inducements. When they did come, they made a noise, paid no attention to my exhorta-

tions, and never seemed to understand what I said to them. If they had, they had been wiser than their teacher. Still I did my best. I scolded, preached, persuaded, remonstrated ; stimulated them with emulation, which never failed to make them quarrel : and urged them by comparisons, which never failed of making one party arrogant, and the other inveterate. Still for a while I was sanguine. The more difficulty, the more merit in the performance. As fast as my scholars forsook me, I got others ; and every moment of time I could command was engrossed with teaching. But after some considerable time the benches thinned—the books wore out—the pinafores were unwashed—the friends ceased to come—and, though I would not own it myself, I was really weary of my task ; weary of repeating what none cared to hear, and none remembered. With a poignancy of disappointment equal to the earnestness of my desire to be useful, I was compelled to perceive that the children did not understand anything better for the time and toil I had expended on them. My heart was very sad under this failure, and my spirit much discouraged. I thought that God refused to bless my undertaking—even that I was not his servant, since he refused my labours. Others' success added poignancy to my mortification, and sin perhaps to my sorrow. My distress was real ; and so much was I at the moment humbled by it, it would have been happiness indeed had any one suggested that I might have mistaken my calling, and set myself to teach, at a period when I had better have been gathering in a store of knowledge for future distribution. However much my pride might have been wounded, I should have been relieved from the apprehension that God disowned my service.

“ About this time my grandmother determined to remove into the country—for her health, she said—but I believed, because she was tired of the disturbance I made in her household economy and distressed by my perpetual absence from her. A house was taken for a twelvemonth at a watering-place on the coast, whither we removed. I felt little regret at abandoning an undertaking which had cost

me so much disappointment. My London society I did indeed regret, but was assured I should find great opportunities of usefulness in my new residence. This consoled me.

“ My first acquaintance was with two maiden ladies, advanced in life, and of a station in society lower than my own ; but of that solid worth and unpretending simplicity of character which cannot be looked down upon. These worthy women, with means the most restricted, contrived to do an immense deal of good, by personal exertion and the influence they had obtained in their neighbourhood. Everybody knew Mrs Mary and Mrs Jane—the rich, who always gave money when *they* asked, without much caring what they did with it—the poor, whose troubles found always a compassionate hearing at their door. They might be seen in the morning in gray cloaks and close bonnets, scudding about the streets with baskets in their hands, filling them with contributions at one door, and emptying them with donations at another. You might find them in the evening in their little parlour in the back street, cutting out baby linen, mixing medicines, or casting up accounts. In every corner was a collecting-box—on every table piles of reports, cases of distress, and prospectuses of societies : there was not one, I believe, to which these active women did not send up their yearly pittance of collections. And Mrs Mary and Mrs Jane had always something to sell ; something that their active hands—one might have thought they had a dozen each instead of two—had wrought for the advancement of their charities — garters, muffetees, and kettle-holders—a hundred articles, which, if nobody wanted, everybody bought out of respect to the manufacturers. These worthy women became the objects of my admiration—and with reason—for with little more for their whole *ménage* than I could command for pocket-money, they administered to the wants of hundreds, had a blessing under every cottage roof for five miles round, and sent help to the heathen of the equator and the pole. My heart grew sick with sadness when I compared their labours with my own—

but there was a remedy—could I not go and do likewise? The resolution was soon taken. I begged my worthy friends to let me assist in all their undertakings, and collect for all their societies, being now a resident in the place, and having nothing to do. They were delighted with the proposal; they had scarcely any assistance; they believed they were not so young as they used to be; and the place increased every year; a great deal more might be done than they had strength for; nothing could be so acceptable as my services. My name was inserted as collector in all their books, and the necessary credentials put into my hands. And now again my untaught heart beat high with joy at the thought of the good that I should do. One morning as I was packing into my handsome French reticule, pencil, books, reports, &c., my grandmother asked me what I was going about. I answered that I was going to collect money for the societies. 'Collect money, dear child!' she said; 'had you better not give them what money they want and keep yourself at home?—you have more than you know how to spend properly—God bless you in the use of it.'

"I was now nearly twenty. With my profession of folly, I had put aside its garb, as to all affectation of fashion or useless expenditure in dress: but still there was a style in my appearance that is not easily put off, particularly where there are personal attractions and the fresh vivacity of youth. Nothing misgiving of any observations I might excite, I sallied forth, morning after morning: knocked at people's doors—so I had been bidden—asked for the mistress, asked for the servants, asked for the money; quite unembarrassed *at first* in the confidence of my good intentions. But some way or another, I knew not how it was, things by degrees went ill. The servants laughed and looked impertinent when they opened the doors. The ladies within carried themselves haughtily, asked a great many questions I was not prepared to answer, and made objections and insinuations which piqued my pride, and sometimes provoked my impertinence. On one or two occasions, where the hour of my coming was known, I per-

ceived that preparation was made for satisfying curiosity, which, however gratifying it might be to my vanity, was not at all so to my delicacy. In short, I was as well known in the streets as the twopenny postman ; but by no means so well received. With the poor, alas ! I had but little success. I was not Mrs Mary nor yet Mrs Jane. I gave, it is true, a shilling for every penny I solicited, and when this was discovered I got subscribers plenty : but they paid no longer than I gave ; they had new wants every time I appeared ; and if these were not attended to, it was impossible to give money, they had not enough for themselves ; and even if they were, I scarcely had a welcome. When I offered consolation, an eye was turned askance upon my dress—‘It was very well for people to talk who had plenty of everything.’ When I ventured admonition, ‘Young gentlefolks knew little of what the poor had to go through.’ I felt deeply at the time these seemingly hard returns for my intended kindness ; but I know now that they were truths. I did not know—I had never suffered—I had never witnessed suffering—I had never even deeply reflected upon it. I knew nothing of its near affinity to vice, and consequently I knew not how to administer to either. I reproved in the wrong place—I offered consolations unsuitable to the mind that was to receive them. From want, not of feeling, but of knowledge of the human heart, I wounded when I meant to soothe, and was imposed upon and misled perpetually. Besides all this, I know not how it happened, but it always rained or snowed when I went out : not more, I suppose, than it did upon Mrs Mary and Mrs Jane—they never stopped, neither would I ; but I had been delicately brought up, and was always taking cold. My grandmother became seriously uneasy—my waiting-maid declared that Miss — had need collect a good deal of money to pay for the refreshing and retrimming of all the bonnets and pelisses she spoiled with rain and mud. At length, it was not till her patience had lasted nearly a year, my grandmother asked me how much in the week I collected. I replied, ‘Why, dear grandmamma, as much as five shil-

lings a week, all in pennies.'—'Well, then, dear child,' she said, 'I do not know what you want with it—there were no such things in my days—but I'll pay the five shillings to keep you at home; and if you add to it all that it costs you, I warrant you will double the sum, and let everybody dispose of their own.' Mortified as I was with this balance of account, I could not dispute its accuracy, and was not, I believe, altogether sorry to resign my task. But there was a feeling attending it of deep distress. Again my hope of usefulness had been defeated. Surely I should take my portion at last with the unprofitable servant, and God would not acknowledge me as his. I poured out my heart, in all its bitterness, to Mrs Mary and Mrs Jane—they did not understand me, either in my reasons for withdrawing, or my distress in doing so—with their usual tone of benevolence, they said, 'Well, well, never mind, God will provide for his own work—young people are apt to get tired—but I should be older by and by.' In thus seeming to cast the blame upon me, to which, in this moment of humiliation, I was myself sufficiently inclined, they added poignancy to my regret; one hint, that what was their calling, might not be mine, would have relieved it.

"Soon after this I married, and again resided in the metropolis. The circumstances of my married life brought me into a different society from that I had been accustomed to; chiefly of pious and literary men and women of superior and cultivated minds. Among these I first began to feel my own want of cultivation—my absolute ignorance of everything; my incapability of taking part in the conversation at my table, or even of profiting by it, when it passed beyond the gossip, religious or otherwise, of the day. For though on the subject of religion I had been perpetually and incessantly hearing, I was truly in the condition of those of whom the apostle speaks—'Ever learning, and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.' I had been hearing and teaching, but neither studying nor reflecting.

"Of the discussions to which I was now so frequently a party, biblical criticism, and nice distinctions of doctrine,

made a considerable part ; even the ladies of my society were Hebrew scholars, as they were in all respects highly informed ; and frequently and modestly betrayed, rather than exhibited, their knowledge of the original Scriptures. Embarrassed and in despair at being thus unlike to all about me, I recollect that I was not too old to learn, and furnished myself with grammars, lexicons, &c. One morning as I sat down to my desk in great state, to wait for a master who undertook to give a perfect knowledge of Hebrew in six lessons, my grandmother—she still lived with me—asked what I was going to do. I told her ; adding, with great solemnity, that it was impossible to come to the true meaning of Scripture without reading the original—endless errors had been grounded upon mistranslation—it was essential to every one to be able to defend the pure doctrine of the gospel, by an appeal to the Hebrew text. This was the first time, I believe the only time, I ever saw my grandmother angry. All else she had attributed to modern notions and a change of times ; but to tell her that one word of her Bible—that very quarto Bible, which, for forty years, had never been left a day unopened—was not right, or could be altered for the better, was to touch her only source of happiness and hope. I cannot bear to think now of the tears I so unnecessarily brought into her eyes. ‘Child,’ she said, dropping her usual appellative of dear, ‘your grandmother has lived too long. I remember when I was a child upon his knee, my grandfather—and he had heard it from his—would tell me stories of the joy and thanksgiving that were among the godly, when the Bible was put into English, that all might understand it—but now, it seems, nobody can understand it but those that can put it back again ! May God keep you from delusion !’ I smiled at her ignorance, but said not amen to her prayer. My study advanced rapidly ; for I was exceedingly quick in learning. I studied hard ; made, as my master assured me, amazing progress ; and, of course, believed that, at the end of the six lessons, I understood the language, and had only to make use of what I knew. I now ventured to join in argument upon the abstruser points of

doctrine. Certain metaphysical questions at that time ran high, and I became a violent partisan—from a real desire, I believe, to advance the truth, but not considering that disputation might not be my calling. I treated those as vulgar and narrow minds, who attempted to lay stress on personal religion, the simplicity of divine truth, and the sanctification of the heart—the commonplace slang of religion, as I called it ; and gave my attention only to those who entertained me with ingenious interpretations, nice distinctions, and as they believed them, deep and comprehensive views. Of these I understood just enough to be misled, and lose in them all cares for what was really important ; but by no means enough to appreciate their value, or judge of their correctness. I learned to talk, however, and I had Hebrew enough to confound all who contradicted me. Say what they would, I said it was an error in the translation—the Hebrew was so and so. I did not wait indeed to be inquired of. I had a real concern for the souls of those who were floundering as I thought, in vulgar error, and took pains to disseminate my new-learned doctrines ; carrying always my Hebrew Bible in my pocket, of which I could yet produce little more than a few peculiar words and passages, on which I rang the changes of my party. I do not know whether I converted anybody to my errors—for such they were at last, if not at first—being opinions, of which I saw not the consequences, nor the necessary inferences, nor anything but the bare statement, and that frequently misapprehended ; but I soon perceived that prudent parents did not desire my intimacy for their daughters—sober and devoted Christians said ‘Humph !’ to my tirades of doctrine, and shewed no disposition to talk to me—and men, from whom I was endeavouring to get information, smiled at my production of Hebrew roots, and asked how long I had studied the language—not altogether as if they admired my accuracy. This affected my vanity, for display had not been my object : but in pursuit of utility and truth, I found myself involved deeper and deeper in confusion, while those whom I desired to benefit became more and more regardless and suspicious

of what I said. And with ample reason—for I did not understand myself the recondite opinions I set forth, and had lost in them all the savour of divine truth. Even the poor whom I visited wished I would talk to them out of their own Bible, for mine was quite different: and some suggested, that since the Bible turned out to be all wrong, they did not see what was the use of reading it. To myself, this was likely to have been the saddest failure of any. For in the years that I thus occupied myself with criticism and controversy, I neglected my English Bible altogether, and my personal interest in it. My character lost its tone of spirituality, which, if it had never been very deep, had been true and simple. Instead of being enlarged, as I conceived it would be, my mind, small enough before, was contracted and bound down to the system of a party, and the conceits of a *set*. These having after a time dispersed, or changed their minds, or dropped discussions that had never engrossed them as they did me, I found that all the gain of three or four more years, was uncertainty of faith upon the most simple truths, desuetude of the ordinary means of grace, carelessness of practice, and some certain quantity of Hebrew roots, for which I had no longer any use. Still, as far as I know, my purpose of heart was single. I needed but to see my error to abandon it—to perceive what I thought a better way, and enter upon it. After another season, therefore, of doubt, discouragement, and almost despondency, I determined to leave study and return to practical utility.

I was now the mother of several children, and the mistress of a large establishment. Time and experience had given me more knowledge of myself—the society of a pious and well-informed husband had improved my understanding—and since I gave up controversy, I had studied more and prayed more; and the detection of former error had imparted to me a distincter knowledge of the truth, at the same time that my character had gained solidity, and my knowledge of mankind had necessarily increased. It seemed that I was now more capable of being useful; and this was still the predominant desire of my heart. But how to set about

it. Providence had indeed surrounded me with duties. I had children to bring up; a household to rule; immortal souls committed to my guidance; and my grandmother, disabled and paralytic, depended upon me for everything. Still no one suggested to me that my calling might possibly be at home. One came to me and asked me to become a patroness to a society—another begged to put my name upon a committee—a third requested me to be a visitor at an infant-school—a fourth wanted me to get up a repository—a fifth to be treasurer of a saving fund—a sixth to be president of a working society—a seventh to be inspector to a tract society—an eighth to open adult schools—a ninth to reform prisons—a tenth to convert Catholics—an eleventh to free slaves—a twelfth—but why go on? More than a hundred solicitors came to me; each one assuring me, that what she proposed was a field of unbounded usefulness, in which she had exerted herself, she hoped, with the blessing of God, to the benefit of others and her own. And I believe that each one spoke the truth. She had known her calling, pursued it ardently, and obtained a blessing whence she expected it. I loved her zeal, coveted the rich reward of their success, determined to imitate them all, and undertook everything that was proposed to me.

“And now I was involved in incessant occupation. The days were not long enough for my charitable labours. I was never in my house but when a committee was assembled there. My name was upon every list, and my presence in every place. What good I did, God only knows—if any, he will look graciously on the record he has kept of it. There was good done: but, I often thought, not more than would have been had I not been there. I had no particular turn for business. I had nothing of that strong, hard, bustling character, usually called management. On most occasions I was an important and well-looking cipher, saying ‘Ay’ to what others proposed. My money and my name were all that were really useful, I believe. Or, if otherwise, the good I did I never knew—what I left undone was but too apparent. Having no time to attend to my

children, I committed the management of them to others. They had governesses, to whom I left them, with unbounded confidence, till, by accident, I saw something amiss, and then I sent them away; the children got beyond everybody's management, and then I sent them to school. They owe not to their mother anything they know, or are—for what they are not, their mother may be questioned. As I was never at home, my servants were left to their own discretion; I gave them no religious instruction, advice, or superintendence. I gave them no habits of domestic regularity. I know not, in short, how they spent their time, or how conducted themselves. To my husband's society I became almost a stranger, and brought little but discomfort to his home. If he was disposed to communicate, I had no time to listen; if he needed my counsel, I was too busy to attend to him. He could not receive his friends, or must receive them alone, because I was always engaged. He could not have his children, because I was drawing up reports, and could not be disturbed. As he had no participation in my pursuits, and I no longer took any interest in his, sympathy decreased between us; communion of thought and feeling became less frequent; the prayer of each went up to Heaven alone; and while he resumed those solitary studies, of which, in the earlier part of our union, he so often communicated the benefit to me, having now no time to learn, I lost the only intellectual, and, I believe I may add, the greatest spiritual advantage that had ever been bestowed on me. My grandmother—she is dead. The attention of menials, and all that money can purchase, lightened her declining years—but I had no time to administer to her sufferings. In short, while my name has stood in public as the patron of all good, and been echoed and lauded from institution to institution through the land, the savour of holiness has not characterised my house, nor its peace abode in my bosom. I am now five-and-thirty. The loss of health, from fatigue and irregularity, confines me to the house, and has obliged me to give up all my undertakings. And now it seems to me, that for seventeen years I have

laboured, though ardently, in vain. I have succeeded in nothing. The good I have done is known only to God—that which I have left undone looks me every moment in the face, in the disorder of my neglected family, and the sinfulness of my neglected heart."

So reads our narrative. In the few remarks the Listener is allowed to make upon what he hears, I cannot comment on the particulars of the story. I hope there are few so unfortunate: but it is worth attention. All these things mentioned are great and important duties—they are the things of which the Saviour said, "These ought ye to have done, and not left the other undone." Each of them, I believe, is somebody's duty; but all of them not anybody's. And in this day of pious occupation, it is especially necessary that each one should know his own calling. From the impulse of a good desire on the whole, though not unmixed with the pride of importance, and the love of distinction, there is a great eagerness to be doing all that we see others do, to appoint ourselves to what Heaven never appointed us, and to engage in a multiplicity of projects without considering our circumstances or capacity. Meantime the duties, less stimulating and less acceptable to our ardent spirits, that may belong to our home and condition, are distasted and overlooked; and our minds, I fear, too often left waste and uncultured. This needs to be particularly guarded against by the young and inexperienced in the present state of society. It is contrary to the whole bearing of the divine precept. All there is required to be "done in order." Each one is to pursue diligently his own calling. If ministry, on ministering; if teaching, on teaching; he that exhorts, on exhortation; he that ruleth, with diligence. Are all apostles? all prophets? all teachers? We may covet, indeed, the best gifts—though still Paul says, there is a better way—but we must wait till they are bestowed before we attempt to exercise them. An earthly monarch appoints different persons to different offices of his state, according as they are capable: and strange indeed would be the confusion, if each one would appoint himself to all. Yet of such confusion I

fear the kingdom of Christ is in danger, from the misguided zeal of his inexperienced servants. To be the medium of communicating blessings from heaven to earth, is the greatest honour that can be conferred on any human being ; and may justly be—nay, must be, if our hearts are right—the first desire of our bosoms. But honours are conferred, not ravished. Watching for it everywhere, ready for it any way, and when the finger of Providence points the way, as ready to follow it in meanness and obscurity, as before an approving crowd, our path of usefulness will be shewn us, as soon as we are capable of being useful, or worthy to be used. But if, so much wanting in humility as to assume our capability, we take possession of everybody's post, follow everybody's calling, and restlessly covet everybody's success, we shall probably learn it in the bitterness of defeat and disappointment.



Driss.

Hélas ! ils conservent une estime et une admiration secrète pour les choses les plus vaines, que le monde même, tout vain qu'il est, ne peut s'empêcher de mépriser.—FENELON.



THERE are follies and vices
to which, however much
we may deplore them, we find it
but little difficult to ascribe a cause.

The pleasure of sin to a corrupted nature is sometimes
clearly obvious, and the fitness of folly to delight a fool,

cannot be disputed by any one. When we find the world's proud heroes exulting over vanquished foes, the ambitious vaunting their acquired powers, and the avaricious boastful of their hoards, we feel no surprise—however false their estimate of good, the gratification of the passion is a temporary pleasure. So, to descend to smaller matters, we are not surprised that a vain woman should be gratified by admiration, or an envious woman by the depression of a rival, or an artful woman by the success of her intrigues. Pitiable and disgraceful as these passions are, we perceive the object of desire is fitted to gratify the folly that pursues it. And before such a gratification can cease to be one, the evil propensity must be itself eradicated. But in my thoughtful wanderings through the world, I have marked one folly, the pleasure of which I have been totally unable to discern. I see it every day, I hear of it every hour, I meet it at every turn, yet cannot find for it a motive or an aim; neither a fitness to gratify any known feeling in the bosom of many who pursue it. I mean the love of dress. So far as dress can improve our personal charms, I can understand it; for then it gratifies the desire of admiration, and to a limited extent is not blameable; for personal attractions are the gift of Providence, and, therefore, to be estimated in due proportion to their worth. But the love of dress exists equally where no such result is expected: age and decrepitude cannot extinguish it—I have observed it in excess, where there was not an expectation nor even a desire to be seen—nay, I have known it to pursue the miserable invalid to her death-bed, amid the full consciousness that earthly admiration was no more for her. And if it be so, that it is without reason, aim, or motive, it must surely be of weaknesses the weakest, of follies the most foolish. And yet it is a weakness—for we hesitate to call it vice—the most prevalent in every class of society, the most costly in money, time, and thought; and, strange to say, most obstinately outliving, in the serious and the sensible, every chastened and subjected passion.

The question naturally suggests itself, why is it so? Is it

the result of education and habit, or of nature? Facts sufficiently attest, that it is inherent in our nature, or, at least, that we are all by nature prone to imbibe the disposition. Why else does the savage, who gives no heed to the comforts of his rude dwelling, or the cleanliness of his voracious meal, delight to deck his hair with coins, and string buttons for his sable bosom? We feel little disposed indeed to blame or to wonder, that where all higher gratifications are unknown, where minds are uncultivated, and objects of desire are so few, and time and thought so much disoccupied, the ornamenting of the person should be so high a source of interest. But with us it will scarcely be urged in excuse for this folly, that it is a natural propensity. It is the business of education to raise us above the propensities of an uncultured state; to afford us higher enjoyments, and more worthy objects of pursuit; to overcome, not to encourage nature's weakness.

Meditating all this, I lately set myself to see which way tend the education and habits of our females of the present day; and why, if to the right, they have so little success in subduing this low taste. I passed over, though not unobserved, the appearance of this propensity in the lower classes. It is cultured even there, and has ruined thousands. The foolish mother spends her ill-spared pence to purchase a bead necklace, and does not fail to impress on the child the pleasure of putting it on for the first time. The dirty school-girl, uncombed and unshod, sticks a faded flower into a ragged bonnet, and exhults over her companions in ideal splendour. A little older, and she spends her scanty wages in Sunday finery, and goes without decent and necessary clothing. A little older still, and her wages will not suffice the growing desire; and theft, and iniquity, and final ruin, are in ten thousand cases to be traced to this destructive propensity. But while it is the duty of every one, by every possible means, to discourage this ruinous inclination in those of the poor whom they can influence, I must confess, I find it not so surprising in their uncultured minds, and low enjoyments, as among some in whom I am obliged

to see it. So I passed them over hastily, to pursue my researches in a higher sphere.

I was on a visit, in what is termed a genteel neighbourhood, within ten miles of London, where the society was sufficiently numerous to afford variety ; and yet so small as to induce the congregating of persons very unequal in rank and fortune ; and also to enable me and everybody else to know who everybody was, what everybody did, and what everybody had to do it with. Among what were considered the visitable people of the neighbourhood, there were one or two persons of high rank and acknowledged fortune. Of these I have nothing to say. The splendid jewel that glittered on their bosoms, nature's own workmanship, seemed but the proper appendage of their rank ; the pearl and the diamond appeared to me as much designed for their brows as the diadem for the prince that wears it ; I saw no reason why they might not wear them as they wear their titles, a thing of course, that cost them neither care, nor time, nor thought, nor anything but that which Providence had abundantly bestowed, and it was their right and duty to distribute. So of their rich and varied dresses. I thought how many thousand beings, who might else have starved, had gained in preparing them an honest and a cheerful maintenance. While the willing finger plied the needle, or twisted the swift bobbins, many a mother's heart was lightened at the thought that, now work was plenty, her babies need not starve. The cost of these superfluities, given without an exchange, could not have afforded such extensive benefit. While their charity fed the poor in vicious and destructive idleness, numbers now rising into opulence by successful trade, but for the superfluous expenditure of the rich must descend to poverty, and share their alms. Here then was neither sin nor folly, as it seemed. Of course, these ladies spent on their dress no more than they properly could spare. Of course no debts unpaid, and just demands evaded, and claims of benevolence refused—or injured fortunes, or impoverished families, or oppressed dependants—of course none of these things would have attested, had I inquired, that

what I took to be the proprieties of station, was no other than the very weakness I had come in search of—a ruinous and excessive love of dress.

In restless and hopeless competition with these, there was a long list of persons, neither absolutely rich, nor absolutely poor, who, thanks to the knowledge of other people's affairs that circulated through this candid district, I was very certain could not pay the dressmaker to supply all the thought, and labour, and ingenuity, that were apparent in their wardrobe, more especially among the younger part of the community. "Whence comes it then?" I thought. But in this sort of community there is little need to think, or even to ask, for all is quickly told. "Your daughters were handsomely dressed last night," said Lady A. "Yes," replied Mrs B. ; "and I assure you the whole was the product of their own industry. They were up till two o'clock the night before to finish their dresses. These things cost my daughters much trouble; but we cannot afford to purchase such dresses." I was beginning to consider what necessity there was for such dresses—for I remembered that the Miss B.'s had been more elegantly dressed than most of the ladies in the room—when my gentle Mrs B. answered this doubt also.—"Did you observe Miss C. last night? Though dressed so plainly, no one looked so lovely, or was so much admired. She tells my girls she has not time to make her dresses, and can only afford to purchase the plainest that can with propriety be worn in the company she keeps. But no ornament could have made her more engaging." So then, I considered, by this good-natured mother's own confession, and I remembered to have thought the same, it had not been necessary for the Miss B.'s to lose their sleep in the service of their persons; and I resolved to observe further the habits and occupations of these parties; one of whom was obliged to make what she could not purchase, and the other to go without what she had not time to make.

In my frequent visits to Miss C., I found her and her sisters always active and always well employed. I heard

not a word about gowns, or bonnets, or trimmings, or flouncings, but I did frequently see them at work ; and by the form and texture of the garments they were making, I perceived they had time to work for others, if not for themselves. I had also, on many occasions, seen them working for themselves ; yet while doing so, they were usually conversing of other matters ; there was an appearance of brevity, unconcern, and simplicity, in the performance of the task, which showed it was not that on which their hearts were fixed or their thoughts engaged, but a duty or a necessity cheerfully acquiesced in. I never saw them slovenly in their appearance, or dressed in bad taste : but there was little variety in their dress and little appearance of contrivance or ingenuity. I never saw five rows of trimming where two would have done as well, or an embroidered frill where a plain one was absolutely unobjectionable.

I found the Miss B.'s very little inferior in most respects to the young ladies with whom I was comparing them. They were sensible, amiable girls, with persons equally agreeable, and minds probably not less cultivated ; for they had been brought up with the same care, and neither party had long had the disposal of their own time. But go when I might, late and early, morning, noon, and night, the Miss B.'s industry was in full exhibition. And all their powers of—mind, I was going to say, but rather of taste and fancy were in constant action in this interesting service. Such endless consultations, such debatings about shapes and colours, such eagerness for new patterns and new fashions, such doing and undoing, planning and counter-planning—what could be thought but that the Miss B.'s dress was the main object of their existence ? We have heard of the industry of the ant and the bee ; but the Miss B.'s might shame them all : for when the ant has built his little house, and laid up his store, he reposes from his toil ; when the bee has gathered honey through the summer, he passes the winter in idleness : the Miss B.'s labours were never at an end ; the summer sufficed not to prepare the winter's stock ; and the winter was too short to make ready for the summer.

What they gained as the reward of their industry, I was not able to learn. They were better dressed, undoubtedly, than the Miss C.'s ; but I never heard that they gained one friend the more, that their society was the more desired, or that anybody loved them the better. What they lost I know. They lost the invaluable hours of youth and life, so rapidly escaping from their hold to be no more reclaimed. They lost the pleasures of mental improvement, and rational and useful avocations. They lost caste, as sensible, agreeable women—for when the habits and pursuits are trifling, the mind will grow trifling too ; and the conversation will not be above the level of the mind. Above all, they lost the “Well done, thou good and faithful servant,” which is the rich reward of all who have rightly used the talents committed to their care.

If any think I have drawn an extreme case, I do not mean to say that all the young ladies in the neighbourhood of C. spent all their time, and all their thoughts, and all their money, upon their dress. Some found that out of three-score years and ten, two-thirds or the half might be sufficient to provide their body's habiliments—some kept up an honourable struggle between duty and inclination, to save a pittance now and then for better purposes—and some did certainly seem to know, that though it was the most important business of life, their attention might at intervals be lawfully diverted into other channels. If any young lady feels that it does not apply to her wholly, she may consider if it does not so in part : and she may do well to consider also the rapid growth of folly, and that what begins but in an idle habit, may become a resistless propensity.

It may be further objected that it applies only to people of fashion or to those we comprise under the more extensive term of people of the world. To this I can only say I wish it were so ; but I am sorry to know it applies no less in the household of the frugal and industrious tradesman—it applies in the most retired paths of domestic life—in the chambers of poverty, sickness, and privation—to the professors, not seldom of a religion, that renounces the

vanities and follies of the world. Let me not be understood to say that religion interferes in this, or in anything, with the distinctions and proprieties of wealth and station. It does not require of the gentlewoman to be dressed like a peasant or a housemaid, or in any way to mark herself by an eccentric departure from the proprieties of the station in which Providence has placed her—there may be as much love of distinction in this as in its opposite excess. But there is inconsistency in the love of dress, and eagerness about it, and time and pains spent upon it, that are seen to survive all other adherence to the laws of fashion.

And if I have rightly spoken of the evil, where is its cause, and where its remedy? I have already said, I believe we are propense by nature to this folly; and, instead of avoiding its growth, we culture it, we teach it to our children as duly as their creed. The nurse talks to the baby of her pretty new frock, long before the baby knows what she says: and, a little later, appeases her temper and her tears by the pleasure of putting it on, long before she could know it was a pleasure, if she were not told so. The mother holds out the promise of a new sash or a new trimming as a bribe or a reward for good conduct. The no wiser friends come in to assist them with birthday presents of trinkets, buckles, and bracelets; and no pains are spared to impress on the children the happiness of wearing these things, and of being seen to wear them. Now it is certain that, in these early years, what we are persuaded to think an enjoyment, soon becomes one; and, in little more, a habitual desire. And to what purpose is all this? Might not children be as well dressed without hearing of it? Might not the presents and rewards be something to use, or to play with, or even to look at, so it did not encourage so foolish and irrational a propensity? And, as they grew up might they not be accustomed to dress themselves with good taste and propriety, as a thing of course, without making it a subject of pain and pleasure? I have heard some mothers,—after spending whole days in ornamenting a child's dress, consulting over it, talking

about it, and admiring it in her presence,—when it came to be put on, and the little creature's eyes began to sparkle with delight, very sagely desire her not to be vain, it did not signify how she was dressed, so she was a good girl. Did the child believe it? She must have more than infantine credulity if she did. On the contrary, the child knew well enough that it was because it was thought fitted to excite exultation, that she was cautioned against feeling any. Had she heard nothing about the matter from first to last, she would probably have not thought of it at all.

But whatever they have been taught to think, my young friends may rest assured that their dress is not a proper subject of eagerness, care, or pleasure. I do not tell them it does not signify how they look or what they wear. It signifies a great deal that every one should be as genteel, neat, and agreeable in their appearance, as their situation will allow. And whether their personal attractions be many or few, it signifies that they wear with simplicity what is graceful and becoming. All this may be done without liking it, thinking about it, or talking about it; and all beyond this is a degradation of their character and powers as rational, intellectual, and immortal beings; and, worse than most other follies, it answers no purpose whatever. If they mean it to make them look better, it does not—if they mean it to make them more highly estimated, it does not—if they mean to pass this waste of time and thought upon the world and themselves for the virtues of industry and economy, alas! what will they think of the mistake, when, their years told out, and time about to be no more, they look back and say, "Ten hours, eight hours, six, five of each one of my numbered days have I expended in clothing and adorning my body, now about to perish, naked and loathsome in the dust."



An Allegory.

..... And the illustration that has been given here of the mingled grace and majesty of God will never lose its place among the themes and the acclamations of eternity.—DR CHALMERS.



ALKING, one noontide, silent and alone, and something oppressed by a still and sultry atmosphere, I laid myself down upon a mound of grass beneath the shelter of a tree; and, while all around me was sunshine and tranquillity, most strangely be-took myself to think of tempests and the storm. Fleetly and prompt the consciousness of all things present passed from my mind. I no longer perceived the sun riding in mid-day splendour through the cloudless heavens, nor heard the rippling of the stream that stole through the herbage at my feet. My senses became absorbed in the distant wanderings of my mind, and imagination carried me, I know not whither, and say not how, to some far region, where I either saw, or dreamed, or feigned, whichever may seem most probable, the following moving incident. I am not without hope that my readers may find the interpretation of it, without the aid of the Babylonish Magi.

In idea, I had joined myself to a company of men who were walking blithely between the overhanging cliff and the

waters of the ocean. The tide was out, the road was broad and smooth : flowers bloomed fair on it on every side : the sun, scarcely yet beginning to decline, veiled at intervals its splendour behind fleecy clouds, appearing and disappearing as they flitted past him, giving increased beauty to the scene by the rapid interchange of light and shadow. Large companies of men were disappearing in the distance before us; but as the road had many windings, and a pale blue mist was on the air, we could distinguish little of their forms, and nothing of the issue of their journey. Behind us, too, as far as eye could reach, there were others advancing by the way we came. But the party to which I had joined myself was small ; I listened attentively to their discourse, and soon perceived there was a dispute amongst them as to the road they were to take.

“Pause yet a moment,” said one, whom, from his discourse, I supposed to be Prudens ; “it is well, at least, that we consider of our path, before we go too far to retreat, if we be wrong. It is true here is space enough, and a fair beaten way. But yonder murmuring tide will briefly steal back upon us. This cliff, too, that bounds us on the other side—we might ascend it now, but it seems to me to become more steep and difficult as we advance. What if, as night approaches, and the sun declines, we be enclosed in some dread pass, where nothing can save us from the ingulping water ?”

“It is not very likely,” said Rationalis. “Why should a road be made so smooth and pleasant if it is not to be trodden? Most clearly toil and care have been spent in making it, and nature has delighted to adorn it. Yonder, too, if I mistake not, are the distant towers of our future home. Far on, it is true, and scarcely visible, but so exactly opposite, that it were folly to turn aside and seek another path, when one so open and direct is lying here before us.”

“Wise men are ye, doubtless,” said Audax ; “but prithee, stay us not to listen to your doubts. If it be so that the night is coming, why, even let us make our way while it is

day. They who go boldly forward are more likely to reach their goal, I ween, than they who loiter here to talk of it."

"You may do even as you will," rejoined Frivolous. "I care little for the beginning or the end, since the midway is thus delightful. I mind not very much if it please you to stay here, at least till I have culled these flowers so beautiful."

But while some doubted, some trusted, and some trifled, I perceived that they all continued to go forward, without any effort to find another path. Prudens went sighing on, with many a prophecy of future danger: Rationalis ceased not to argue on the impossibility of any such danger existing: Audax continued to deride them both, and Frivolous was too busy with his flowers to give heed to anything. But however much divided in opinion, and disposed to argue, they were perfectly agreed in practice; for all went blithely forward. It was now I first observed among them one whose appearance was strangely different from the rest. While all beside were smiling, the deepest shade of sorrow hung upon his brow. The subdued and sober stillness of his walk was strongly contrasted with the airy lightness of his companions'. There was in his countenance an inscrutable expression of mental anguish, veiled, but not hidden, by a smile of patient acquiescence. The sigh that he heaved not, seemed imprisoned in his bosom only to burst it the more surely. The tear that fell not from his dimmed and sunken eye, was as if suspended there, lest the shedding of it should relieve his anguish. He was not old, and yet there were lines of more suffering in his countenance than could be crowded into two-score years. The swollen lip and pallid cheek of careful watchfulness, the languor and exhaustion of a body spent and over-worn by too much endurance, were strangely intermixed with an air of calm and firm determination, that seemed preparing to meet another blow. I marvelled much what manner of person this might be, that looked so sorrowful when all around were gay—that seemed as if he had taken to himself the miseries of them all,

and, like the packhorse of some lightsome troop, was bearing the burden of which each one had made haste to rid himself. His soft, submissive eye was for the most part bent upon the ground. I should have thought him indifferent to what was passing round him, had I not observed that he looked sometimes towards the cliff with anxious earnestness, as if measuring its growing height, and sometimes towards the sea, now rapidly approaching. I even fancied there was an expression of growing apprehension, as he watched its progress. And then he looked at his companions as if he would have spoken, but knew not how to gain a hearing. And indeed it was not easy, for they were vastly talkative and busy, one with the other, and paid no more attention to him than if they knew him unworthy of regard. "Do they really know this?" I considered within myself; "for else it might seem that his sorrow, at least, should move them to compassion. Since he has travelled thus far in their company, he cannot be unknown to them: and yet he walks, of all contemned and disregarded, as if he were a stranger, and alone. I would, at least, that he might speak."

And scarcely had I formed the wish, when I saw the Man of Sorrows advance more closely towards his blithe companions, from whom he had walked hitherto some little space apart; and with a voice that seemed to issue from the bottom of a breaking heart, "Pause here a moment, travellers," he said, "and list you to my words." I waited the effect of this address—but no one paused, and no one listened; while the pensive stranger continued to regard them with an air of anxious and alarmed solicitude. And now I thought his pallid countenance grew almost beautiful by the love, and tenderness, and pity, that lighted up his features. "Pause, travellers," he repeated in a louder tone, "for danger cometh upon us as a thief in the night, and no man heeds its coming." Eyes were now turned upon him, as if content to hear—but scorn and derision were in all of them, and no one slackened his pace. The Man of Sorrows spoke—"Travellers on a road of which ye know not the dangers or the end, list to the voice of one who

takes care for you, though you take none for yourselves. Ye are bound, ye say, to yonder fair city, whose towers scarcely yet are visible in the distance; but this is not the way. Your senses deceive you. There is between us and our distant home a pass, which no man ever yet has crossed. Full well I know the spot. The darkening cliff hangs frowning over it, bare and inaccessible to human footstep. The boiling surge breaks on the rocks beneath, and fills up the cavern many a fathom deep. The sea-mew scarcely dares to build his nest upon the heights, lest the tempest rock his cradle to the deep. No vessel ever cast an anchor there, or ventured near to rescue them that perish. Of all who go that way not one returns; for, ever as the rising tide flows in upon their path, and closes their retreat, those who are nigh to that tremendous passage go into it, and perish. Be warned while it is day, for the night cometh in which no man can escape." And he lifted up his humid eyes, as if to see how far the daystar had gone down; but there were many hours yet before its setting. The party marked it too, and smiled. "I know not," said Audax, "why we should mar the pleasures of the day by thinking of the night. When the danger is at hand, it will be time enough to think of an escape. Methinks thy malice envies us our present good, since thou art so eager to empoison it with fear. Are we to turn us from our beaten course, because a soured and distorted fancy sees ills that no man besides thee ever told of? We go the way our fathers went before us, and doubtless shall rejoin them where they are. And yonder multitude, still moving in the distance—are they, too, all deceived, and only thou so wise? How camest thou by thy knowledge?" And he turned himself away with a sneer, and listened no more to the discourse.

"Thou art a fool," said Rationalis; "for, unless thou hast been there, how canst thou know the issue of the path? And if thou hast, there is some retreat, it seems, since thou hast found it. I can see much to prove that this should be our path, and only thy single word to say us nay. As wise

men, therefore, it behoves us to take the side of probability ; to be guided by the things we see, and not to be diverted from our purpose by fanciful representations of what, by thy own confession, no man who has tried it e'er returned to tell." And he looked on the admonitor with the contemptuous pity of one who waits an answer to what he believes unanswerable.

Frivolous looked up with a smile ; but, not exactly understanding the matter in dispute, and concluding it was no business of his, left them to settle it as they might, and returned to his amusements.

But Prudens drew closer to the side of him who warned them, and seemed disposed to listen to his counsels. "Knowest thou, then," he said, "a safer and a better path ? For ere we quit the one we are pursuing, it befits us that we find another. Well I see we walk between two barriers that may become impassable ; the way already narrows, and I am not without my apprehensions. But where is the remedy ? Path see I none but this."

"There is a remedy," replied the Man of Sorrows. "I know a path—it is steep and difficult indeed, and trodden but by a few. No man will exchange for it this smooth and flowery way, if he believe not that destruction waits him here. Yonder it winds between the crevices of that tall cliff. We shall find many openings to it as we proceed, but each one becomes more difficult than the last, and if we go too far, we may seek for it in vain. Could we but reach the summit of the cliff, the way, though stony, is secure, and the prospect beautiful."

"We should do well to abide thy counsel," replied Prudens, "if what thou sayest be true. And if I were but sure of it, I would not hesitate to leave all and follow thee. But the path you bid us to looks gloomy and little promising ; nor perceive I well why such a one should be the only one to the place we seek. He who invites us thither would surely make it more accessible. I almost dispose to leave the company and go with thee ; but they will mock us, and with reason, should it appear we have taken unnecessary

trouble, and gained but toil and deprivation for our pains. Better that we be not rash, but try a little how this path may bear." And so he betook himself to other matters. And they all with one accord turned their backs upon their monitor, and forgot at once his warning and himself.

And I looked if in his patient eye there was a gleam of anger for their scorn. But no. A thicker cloud of sadness did indeed pass over it—he smote upon his gentle bosom, and looked up to heaven—but not as if he asked a curse upon their folly. I could rather fancy that every movement of his quivering lip was an aspiration for mercy on their heads. Meantime the tide arose. Already the dashing waters thundered on the shore; the sun was going down, and the fast-gathering clouds threatened to extinguish his departing beams even before their setting. The party had gone far upon their way, and seemed but less sensible of danger as it approached them nearer. I saw the poor despised one pause a moment, and look earnestly behind him. I, too, looked backward, and perceived the waters had already overflowed some portion of the way we came, so as to make return impossible. The rocks had become almost perpendicular, and while I followed each movement of his eye, again directed forward, I perceived a passage very much like the one he had described. He saw it too. His dimmed eye kindled at the sight, and with more vehemence than before, he rushed forward into the midst of his companions. "Travellers, brethren, friends, I do beseech you hear me! The moment is come. Destruction is upon the heads of all of you—another instant, and it falls. A few minutes more, and the tide overflows this path—a few yards further, and there is no access to the heights—already retreat is cut off from behind you. If you go forward, you must perish. Believe, and you may yet be saved—reject my counsel, and you die."

But they all by this time had grown hardened in their course; they were weary and indisposed to effort. They had heard these threats so often, that they were to them as an idle tale. And now grew they angry at what before they

mocked, and "Cease thy prating," they exclaimed. "We have heard thy ravings till we are sated of them. Mile by mile thou hast rung these changes in our ears. Let us at least hear something new, if that we needs must listen to thee. Despite thy prophecies and thy prayers for our destruction, we have come on our way in peace; the end is even at hand, and thine eyes shall feast not in the sight of our destruction."

He answered, "Revile me as you will—heap scorn and contempt upon my blameless head—let me be, as I have been, the outcast and the scorn of all men—trample me under your feet as a despised thing—I bear it all, so you but let me save you. Escape, while there is yet a moment, and do with me even as you will. A hundred yards forth, and your doom is fixed for ever. Say, will you yet go forward?"—"We will go forward," they replied. "We see as well as thou dost the pass thy cowardice fears. We see the tide has crossed the path before us—but still it is smooth and shallow. We can ford it. And what though yon bold projecting rocks hide something from our view, we believe not that danger is beyond. We are resolved to try it."

The Man of Sorrows heard. An agony of conflicting feelings rent his withered form. He clasped his hands upon his bosom as if waiting for power to perform what already he resolved. The calm composedness of grief subdued, gave place to the struggle of despair. His forehead bathed itself with sweat—his eye was swollen with anguish, and in the attitude of one who must, but cannot, he stood as if irresolute. 'Twas but a moment, and with the step of one who dooms himself to perish, and goes forth to effect his purpose, he placed himself in front of the advancing group, and, in a voice that startled them to compliance, he exclaimed, "Stand, travellers, a moment, for you must. I warned you long, and ye refused to listen. I entreated you, and ye answered me with scorn. Had I not loved you, I had left you to your fate, and saved myself without you. But neither could your slights repulse me, nor your wrongs offend. For every blow you struck at this unsheltered

bosom, I gave you back a sign of pity and of love—such love as ye shall witness ere we part. I tell you this path is death, and you believe me not. Be it so. I have shewn you the danger; I have shewn you the escape; I have reasoned with you, besought you, prayed for you. All is in vain, and there is but one way left. Pause here a moment where you are, and let me try that dreadful pass before you. If I perish not, go on your way in peace, and leave me for the madman and the fool you think me. But if I die in the attempt—if, in yon dark waters ye esteem so shallow, ye see me struggling in the grasp of death—if ye see, as ye stand here in safety, the ingulfing chasm close in upon the earthly form of him whom ye despise—O then! it is all I ask of you to requite the sacrifice, it is all I ask in payment of my love, believe the danger, and escape while it is day."

The travellers stood fixed in mute amazement on the spot. The devoted being advanced to where the waters closed upon the rock. Turning one last, tearful look on those who obstinately had doomed him thus to perish, and spending all that remained to him of life in prayer to Heaven for them, "Believe, and be ye saved," he said—and plunged into the waves. A moment he struggled—a moment and he was gone.



Sarcasm.

On ne rencontre que trop souvent dans la société de ces esprits mal-faisants, qui déchirent par instinct, mordent par habitude ; et qui, pour un bon mot, se font un jeu cruel de trahir la confiance, d'outrager l'amitié, de critiquer le pouvoir, et d'insulter au vrai mérite.—BOUILLY.



HERE are cases, I fear, where ill-nature, a deliberate desire of giving pain, an envious wish to depreciate what we cannot reach, expends itself in bitter and indiscriminate sarcasm. These cases are beyond our reach—the curse of Ishmael is upon them—their hand is against every man, and every man's hand is against them. The mischief is in the depth of a malignant heart, and Heaven alone can mend it. Doubtless, there are others in whom

this practice arises from a wish to shine, a settled purpose of exhibiting a peculiar talent ; which is certainly not wit, but near enough approaching it to be so called, and in itself sufficiently entertaining. These, too, we must leave. If they like the applause of the world better than its love, its laugh better than its approbation, they must take their choice. But I have met with many jesters of this kind, in whose bosom no malignant passion could be sheltered, and in whose heart, I hope and believe, no desire of

applause at others' cost could be indulged. In these I should consider it a natural trait of character; continued for want of reflection on its dangerous and unholy tendency, or, perhaps, from the difficulty of subduing a late discovered evil.

These, I would hope, might be prevailed upon to consider the mischief of this thoughtless indulgence of a natural humour.

But we must leave the scrutiny of motives to Him who knows; and to that self-examination I would strongly urge on all who are conscious of the practice. Whencesoever it arises, it is a habit the most destructive of all affectionate communion, all rational conversation, and all religious sobriety of mind—the enemy at once of piety, taste, and feeling. I would rather take for my companion the dullest spirit that ever hung upon my hands, than be doomed to the society of one of these eternal jesters. Those at least would allow me so much enjoyment as I could find elsewhere, if they could provide me none. But these—whatever is beautiful in character, in nature, in works of taste, in the productions of intellect, they spoil me the enjoyment of, by obtruding on my attention some ludicrous imagination of their own, some mockery of defects that may or may not exist; affording me a little mirth in exchange for the mind's best and highest gratifications. Would that the molestations of these living Travesties ended here! But it does not. The pain they give to those who are present, is perhaps not very considerable. The weak and timid only are susceptible of these sallies—not the less, but rather the more inexcusable on that account. Sensible minds care very little about the matter; and if they happen to be fond of mirth, would as soon be made to laugh at themselves as at anybody else. But the injury they do the absent is considerable. It is not possible to measure the unperceived influence of such sallies on the opinion one person forms of another: or to calculate the impressions remaining from them on the mind, without our being conscious whence they came. Surely this is a grave consideration. Would those

whose benevolent minds are busied in administering comfort to humanity, who desire to shew their love to God whom they have not seen, by every evidence of love to their brethren whom they have seen, and who would not, for any selfish gain, deliberately wrong the lowliest child upon earth—would these like to discover that they have robbed the lonely of a friend, have winged the shaft of malice against the defenceless—have made the full cup of sadness to run over but one added drop—perhaps have overborne with shame some contrite spirit, or brought contempt on some struggling child of God ? They may never discover it. They may never know it, until those books are opened. But for a little mirth, for a merit of a little brilliancy, will they take the risk ?

Would that the evil stopped even here. But there is one character of sarcasm, the prevalence of which has much dwelt upon my mind, waiting the opportunity of alluding to it in these papers. I speak of the habit of ridiculing the professors of religion, and especially its ministers. From the world we expect this. We know whence it arises, and what it means ; for we know that when the voice, or manner, or other peculiarity of the minister are sarcastically noticed, the laugh excited is intended to fall upon the doctrine he preaches. But young people who thus amuse themselves, without any sinister intention, are little aware, I believe, of the injury they do others, and more particularly themselves. It is perfectly indecent, the manner in which, at the very doors of the sanctuary, you may hear them make mirth of the reader's or the preacher's peculiarities. There are those among my acquaintance whom I carefully watch out of the church, before I leave my seat, lest I should meet them in the aisles, and have every serious impression dissipated by some sarcastic mimicry of the preacher's tones and expressions. And many, many times, at the dinner table, or in the evening circle, have I sat with painful sadness, listening to the exaggerated statements, the sarcastic criticism, with which the Sabbath service was reviewed—not by enemies—not by disapprovers—

but by those who should, and who did, set the highest value on what they heard.

Nor is it persons only. The things of God, religion itself—they do not mean it, I trust, but religion itself is not too sacred for the blight of their unhallowed jesting. I have the misfortune to have some friends, whose good feeling towards religion I should be sorry to doubt, who never mentioned it without the same play of words they accustom themselves to use in everything: not seldom, I grieve to say, the words of Scripture itself, so travestied as to excite a smile at, if not against, the most pious practices and exalted truths; the objects, I really believe, of their reverence, as much as of my own. Could they know how the more serious and deeply feeling bosom shudders at that venturesome sport—how the sacred words pronounced in ludicrous association, jar the heart that has been used to hear in them the language of its intensest feelings—surely they would blush and be ashamed for their unholy mirth. I would give instances of what I mean, but I fear to seem personal. Many are in my recollection; and may come, possibly, to the recollection of those who read. If it should be so, I am persuaded they will receive the Listener's affectionate remonstrances without resentment. This mirthful fancy, when united with an amiable disposition, is very entertaining. There are ways in which it may be very innocently indulged: for never was religion an enemy to harmless mirth. There will be occasions in which it may be even usefully exercised, and prevail where reason cannot. But in things sacred, in things serious, in things divine—towards persons who should be sacred for the things' sake, it can never be harmless. These jesters are little aware of the effect of each ludicrous association on the weak and vacillating mind; and the unconfessed gratification and encouragement afforded by them to spirits profane and worldly. Nor are they more aware of the injury their own minds suffer from this indulgence. They may not know it, but they cannot name a thing irreverently without lessening their reverence for it; they cannot allude to things serious without seriousness, but they

become less important in their estimation. And surely they might be aware that the minister or other servant of God, whose defects and peculiarities they are accustomed to ridicule, cannot retain an influence over their minds—no small consideration, when it is through the medium of his servants our Lord so generally dispenses the influence of his grace.

THE END.

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